

by BERTRAND RUSSELL

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Nightmares of Eminent Persons

BERTRAND RUSSELL

LEGITIMACY VERSUS INDUSTRIALISM

1814-1848

Chaos umpire sits
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him high arbiter
Chance governs all.

MILTON

G. V. Sarveswara Rao

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Introduction

This book contains the first half of a book called *Freedom & Organization, 1814-1914*, published in 1934. The second half of this book will be reprinted under the title, 'Freedom *versus* Organization, 1776-1914'.

The half of this book which is here reprinted deals first with conventional diplomacy from the Congress of Vienna to the outbreak of revolutions in 1848, a period during which European Governments remained aristocratic, reactionary, and traditional, representing in the main the interests of landowners. It then passes to the new anti-aristocratic outlook inspired by industrialism, from Malthus to Marx. This outlook expressed, at first, the interests of employers, but afterwards that of wage-earners. Of this new outlook, official diplomacy remained ignorant.

The second half of the original book, now a separate volume, deals first with the growth and new importance of the United States and then with the official relations of European States to the outbreak of war in 1914, showing a close resemblance to the Congress of Vienna in spite of all the vast changes in the world during the intervening century.

Throughout both books one constant theme is the fluctuating fortunes of liberalism. Liberalism, as inherited from the eighteenth century, was an individualistic doctrine. It believed in the Rights of Man and a minimum of governmental interference. Its ideal was a population of peasant proprietors and handicraftsmen. But industrial technique developed vast monopolies, possessing great power, and allowing individual initiative only to a few immensely influential captains of industry. *Laissez faire* proved self-destructive, and failed to bring the hoped-for freedom. It appeared that, if freedom was to be recovered, a new social philosophy was needed.

The outcome of this development is dealt with in the second book, which should be read jointly with the first.

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PART I

THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGITIMACY

A Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte

. . . I know

Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

SHELLEY

CHAPTER ONE

Napoleon's Successors

IDEALISM is the offspring of suffering and hope, and therefore reaches its maximum when a period of misfortune is nearing its visible termination. At the end of a great war, men's hopes fasten upon one among the victors as a possible champion of their idealistic aims. After the fall of Napoleon, this rôle was offered by popular acclamation to the Tsar Alexander, and was by him accepted with alacrity. It must be said that his competitors for ethical supremacy were not morally very formidable. They were, among sovereigns, the Emperor Francis of Austria, Frederick William of Prussia, the Prince Regent, and Louis XVIII; among statesmen, Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand.

Of these men, Francis had been the last of the Holy Roman Emperors, a title which had descended to him from Charlemagne and of which he had been deprived by Napoleon, who considered himself the true heir of that barbarian conqueror. Francis had become accustomed to defeat by Napoleon, and had at last given his daughter Marie Louise to be the wife of the 'Corsican upstart,' hoping thereby to break him of the habit of making war on Austria. When, after the Russian disaster of 1812, Napoleon

began to seem no longer invincible, Francis was the last of the great monarchs to join the coalition against him. Throughout all the years of trouble, Austria had always been willing to profit by any bargain that Napoleon cared to propose, and as the result of a policy that aimed at expediency rather than heroism, the Austrian army, though large, had distinguished itself less than that of Prussia in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. This policy was due, not to Francis, but to his minister, Metternich, who, having entered the service of his Emperor at an early age, was left in charge of foreign affairs as soon as he had taken well to heart that all change was unwelcome to his master. Relieved of external responsibility, Francis was free to concentrate upon the more congenial task of regulating the internal administration of his Empire. The judicial system was so centralized that the details of the most trivial prosecutions came to his notice, and, having a taste for such matters, he interested himself even in the conduct of executions. He rarely revised a sentence, and never exercised the prerogative of mercy. In his closest associates he inspired no affection, and to the rest of the world he was practically unknown.

Frederick William, though his troops had distinguished themselves, had won even less personal respect than the Emperor of Austria. While Austria was being battered in 1805, Prussia remained a vacillating spectator, to be crushed in the following year at Jena, where all the prestige derived from Frederick the Great was dissipated in a day. The poor king was compelled to take refuge in the extreme eastern corner of his dominions, and when, in 1807, Alexander and Napoleon made friends at Tilsit, he sent his beautiful Queen to intercede for him with the two Emperors. Napoleon was unmoved, but the gallant Alexander liked to think of himself as the champion of beauty in distress. The result was a treaty in which Napoleon declared that, out of deference to the wishes of Alexander, he permitted Frederick William to retain a portion of his former kingdom. Frederick William's gratitude to Alexander was warm and lasting, but to the very end he continued to be unreliable, owing to his hesitating temperament, and thereby earned the contempt even of his closest allies.

George III, after losing the American colonies and forbidding Pitt to introduce Catholic Emancipation, had been belatedly certified as insane, but was still King of England. His functions were executed by the Prince Regent, an elderly beau, much

ashamed of his corpulence, but too greedy to take any steps to cure it. Politically, the Prince Regent stood for all that was most reactionary; privately, for all that was most despicable. His treatment of his wife had been such that he was hissed when he appeared in the streets of London; his manners, to which the English Court had grown accustomed, were such as foreign ladies found unendurable. Throughout his whole life, so far as is known, he never succeeded in acquiring the respect of any single human being.

Louis XVIII, whom united Europe restored to the throne of his ancestors, and on whose behalf, in a sense, the twenty-two years of warfare had been waged, had few vices but still fewer virtues. He was old, fat, and gouty, practically a stranger to France, which he had left as a young man nearly a quarter of a century ago. He was not without shrewdness, and he was more good-natured than most of his friends. But he had spent the years of his exile among the enemies of France, hoping for the defeat of his country as the only means to his own restoration. His *entourage* consisted of princes and aristocrats who had fled from the Revolution, and who knew nothing of the France created by the Convention and Napoleon. As the *protégé* of foreign enemies, he could hardly be respected in his own country, and foreign governments, while they placed him on the throne, did so because his weakness gave them hopes of that security of which they had been robbed by Napoleon's strength.

Such were Alexander's royal competitors for popular favour. His competitors among statesmen were abler, but hardly such as to inspire general enthusiasm. The most powerful among them, throughout the years of the Great Peace, was Metternich, who remained the ruler of Austria and almost the arbiter of Europe until he was dislodged by the revolutions of 1848, which his policy had rendered inevitable. Throughout the whole period from 1814 to 1848, he was the prop of reaction, the bugbear of liberals, and the terror of revolutionaries. His fundamental political principle was simple, that the Powers that be are ordained of God, and must therefore be supported on pain of impiety. The fact that he was the chief of the Powers that be, gave to this principle, in his eyes, a luminous self-evidence which it might otherwise not have possessed.

Born in 1773, of an ancient noble family in the Rhineland, Metternich represented a type intermediate between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His father lost a large part

of his estates as a result of the invasion of Germany by French revolutionary armies, and this circumstance did nothing to increase Metternich's love of revolutions. The Austrian diplomatic service, in which his father had a meritorious but not distinguished career, was the obvious profession for the young man, and his prospects were promoted by marriage with the rich granddaughter of the famous Kaunitz, who brought about the Franco-Austrian Alliance at the time of the Seven Years' War. Metternich had at no time any sympathy with German nationalism, or indeed with any other nationalism. States were, for him, the personal estates of monarchs, and required no other principle of cohesion. Western Germany was traditionally pro-French, and Austria, whose territory comprised Germans, Magyars, Slavs, and Italians, was the chief enemy of nationalism throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. In this respect, Metternich, like Austria, carried on the traditions of the pre-revolutionary age. The same is true of his attitude towards the Church, for, though a pious Catholic, he showed little reverence for the Pope in his temporal capacity, and was often politically anti-clerical.

There were other traits in Metternich's character, however, which make him worthy to rank as a Victorian. (When he died, Queen Victoria had been twenty-two years on the throne.) Conceit is not peculiar to any one period, but Metternich's special brand of pompous priggery belongs to the epoch between the Napoleonic wars and the great war. If we are to believe his Memoirs, he was totally devoid of ambition, and remained in public life solely from a sense of duty and the painful realization that others lacked his abilities. So persuaded was he of his own moral grandeur that he thought it must be equally obvious to others. Late in 1813, when, having at last seen which way the cat would jump, he had terminated the double game of Austria between France and Russia, he wrote to his daughter: 'I am certain Napoleon thinks of me continually. I must seem to him a sort of conscience personified.' His statement of the reasons which led him to overcome his shrinking from worldly glory is most impressive:

That a public career was distasteful to me I have already mentioned. Convinced that everyone ought to be prepared to answer for the deeds of his own life; penetrated by the consciousness of the enormous difficulties of propping up a society which was falling to pieces on every side; disapproving, before

the tribunal of my own conscience, of almost all the measures which I saw adopted for the salvation of the social body, undermined as it was by the errors of the eighteenth century; lastly, too diffident to believe that my mind was of so powerful a stamp that it could improve whatever it undertook: I had determined not to appear on a stage on which the independence of my character rebelled against playing a subordinate part, though I did not consider myself capable of taking the part of a reformer.

The care with which my education had been directed to the wide field of politics had early accustomed me to contemplate its vast extent. I soon remarked that my mode of thinking of the nature and dignity of this sphere was essentially different from the point of view from which all this was regarded by the enormous majority of those who are called to play great political parts.

The great names in diplomacy, both of past times and of his own day, did not, so he tells us, inspire him with respect.

Resolved not to walk in their steps, and despairing of opening a path in harmony with my own conscience, I naturally preferred not to throw myself into those great political affairs, in which I had far more prospect of succumbing materially than of succeeding: I say materially, for I have never been afraid of failing morally. The man who enters public life has always at command a sure resource against this danger, that is—retirement.

To the onlookers, Austria, in Napoleon's day, did not seem to be playing a very glorious part. This, however, was not the way matters presented themselves in Metternich's memory. 'Under the load of enormous responsibility,' he says, 'I found only two points on which it seemed possible to rest, the immovable strength of character of the Emperor Francis, and my own conscience.'

From Metternich's Memoirs one would hardly be able to discover what he was like as a social being, although it was to his social arts that he owed his success. He was at no time profound; he was clever in carrying out his schemes, but scarcely exceptional in conceiving them. He was gay and pleasant; only those whom he was actively thwarting disliked him. Like most of the diplomats of the period, but with more success than the others, he mixed politics with love affairs. Ladies from whom political

secrets were to be learnt received from him attentions which they usually found irresistible. Sometimes the game was played on both sides. For many years he was on intimate terms with Napoleon's sister Caroline Murat; he learnt from her sometimes Napoleon's secrets, sometimes what Fouché thought it well for him to hear. When Austria befriended Murat in 1814, Talleyrand, in his letters to Louis XVIII, roundly accused Metternich of being influenced by love for Queen Caroline; but at first there were sound political motives for Austria's attitude, and when these motives failed the Queen's charms lost their potency. Metternich may have been sometimes outwitted in his gallantries with political ladies, but he cannot justly be accused of having ever been led astray by the heart.

Above all else, Metternich was an aristocrat—not of a territorial aristocracy, such as those of England and Russia, but of that type of Court aristocracy that the world owed to Louis XIV. Great affairs were for sovereigns and their ministers, who had no need to consider the interests of the vulgar. The people, for Metternich, scarcely exist, except when he is forced to contemplate with disgust the dirt and raggedness of French revolutionaries. When, later, the populace begins again to be intrusive, his instinct is to tread on it as one would on a black beetle. A very polished gentleman—almost the last before the democratic deluge.

Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, was a man of estimable private character, personally disinterested, and impartial in diplomacy. He was not brilliant, and foreigners laughed at him (as they did later at Wilson) for his ignorance of Continental geography.¹ But he had sound good sense, and less predisposition to trickery than most of his contemporaries. Without being showy, he was shrewd. At the Congress of Vienna, the Austrian Government succeeded in placing its spies as housemaids in almost all the embassies, where the contents of waste-paper baskets were pieced together and sent to the police; Castlereagh, however, brought his own maidservants, and caused the secret police difficulties of which they complained bitterly in their reports. He was a man who seldom deceived others, but was himself not easy to deceive. From his correspondence one would judge him to be a man without emotions and without bias except that of his class and nation: personal likings and

¹ Talleyrand, in this connection, quotes the remark of Kaunitz: 'It is prodigious how much the English don't know.'

antipathies seem to play no part in the formation of his opinions. He had a thoroughly British suspicion of foreigners. On January 30, 1815, he writes to Lord Bathurst: 'I beg you will not give any money at present to any of the Continental Powers. The poorer they are kept, the better, to keep them from quarrelling.' After Napoleon's fall, he sincerely desired peace. The Austrian Minister Gentz, speaking of the Congress of Vienna, says: 'England wished for peace, peace before everything, peace—I am sorry to say it—at any price and almost on any conditions.' In foreign affairs Castlereagh had considerable merit. He was, however, an important member of one of the worst and most cruel governments with which England has ever been cursed, and deserves his full share of reprobation on this account. It is psychologically surprising that this cold precise mind succumbed finally to a form of madness leading to suicide. Greville rightly says that his 'great feature was a cool and determined courage, which gave an appearance of resolution and confidence to all his actions, and inspired his friends with admiration and excessive devotion to him, and caused him to be respected by his most violent opponents.' In his correspondence as Foreign Secretary it is surprising to find with what authority he can write to ambassadors without causing resentment; even the Duke of Wellington is not above receiving instructions from him. But although, as Greville says, those who were brought into close contact with him by their work were devoted to him, his colourless personality could not inspire any widespread enthusiasm. This also appears from what Greville says about the news of his death: 'When I got to town I met several people who had all assumed an air of melancholy, a *visage de circonstance*, which provoked me inexpressibly, because it was certain that they did not care; indeed, if they felt at all, it was probably rather satisfaction at an event happening than sorrow for the death of the person.' A vain man would not like to know that this was to be his epitaph, but I doubt whether Lord Castlereagh would have minded.

Of the important personages at the Congress of Vienna, the only one remaining is Talleyrand, who represented Louis XVIII and the interests of Bourbon France. Born in 1754, of a family of the highest French aristocracy, he had time, after he grew up, to enjoy the *ancien régime*, and always maintained afterwards that those born too late for this did not know the true delight of living. Owing to an accident in early childhood, he

was debarred from the career of arms; his parents therefore destined him for the Church, and made his younger brother the heir of the family estates. He became Bishop of Autun, but no great piety was expected of aristocratic Church dignitaries, so that he was able to enjoy life in the company of dissolute, liberal-minded, and highly intelligent friends. His dislike of an ecclesiastical career, as well as his genuine convictions, made him throw in his lot with the Revolution, and support the civil constitution of the clergy. At the beginning of the Reign of Terror, however, he found it necessary to fly. He escaped to England, where the Government suspected him of being a French spy and refused to let him stay. From England he went to America, where he made many friends, the most important of whom was Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury. Finally, when the storm had abated, he returned to France.

As Napoleon's foreign minister, he at last found scope for his talents. He was not heroic, and always avoided sharp conflicts when he could; when he disagreed with Napoleon, he would submit sooner than resign office. He was never above taking a bribe for what he meant to do in any case, and in this way he amassed an enormous fortune; but there is no evidence that bribes ever influenced his policy. He had the virtues belonging to unheroic intelligence: he was good-natured, had few hatreds, disliked war, and did all he could to promote free commercial intercourse between nations. He endeavoured, but without success, to restrain Napoleon's ambition; when he failed, fore-seeing Napoleon's fall, he began to intrigue with the Bourbons. At Erfurt, in 1808, when Napoleon and the Tsar Alexander met to partition the world, he warned Alexander against Napoleon, in whose service he still was. When his treachery was discovered, he was dismissed from office, but not disgraced; and as soon as Napoleon fell, he came into power again, though not for long, owing to the hostility of the clericals and ultra-royalists whom the Restoration again brought into prominence.

There were some surprising things about Talleyrand. Though a priest, he married; though an aristocrat, he married a woman of no pretence to birth or breeding, who lived an openly irregular life both before and after the marriage. But he retained through everything his imperturbable good manners, which Napoleon found infuriating. On one occasion, when the Emperor scolded him in public, Talleyrand's apparent indifference led to greater and greater violence on the part of Napoleon, who finally

taunted him with his lameness and his wife's infidelities. Talleyrand smiled unmoved, and when the tirade had at last ended he turned to the bystanders and remarked, with a shrug: 'What a pity that such a great man should be so ill bred.'

Few men have lived through such changes as occurred during the life-time of Talleyrand. He was born under Louis XV; he died during the reign of Queen Victoria. He had innumerable love-affairs, many of them marked by genuine affection; indeed affection is one of the key-notes of his character. In his old age, free thought and free love had gone out of fashion; Victorian virtue had become the thing, in France as in England. He adapted himself to the changing times, assuming as much virtue as the new code of manners demanded,¹ and reconciling himself with the Church on his death-bed in the most dramatic fashion imaginable. Almost his last words were to remind the officiating priest that he must receive extreme unction after the manner prescribed for bishops.

At heart, throughout his life, he retained the outlook which was common among liberal aristocrats of the time of Louis XVI. Most men of this type were guillotined, or were killed in the wars, or became reactionaries from fright during the reign of terror. Talleyrand escaped all these disasters through his suppleness, his philosophic calm, and the dominating force of his intellect. His conversation had such charm that even in old age he could captivate the prudish ladies of a morally regenerated but intellectually enfeebled century: beginning by regarding him as a reprobate, they would soon come under the spell of his wit, his culture, his breadth of outlook, and his very real kindness. Undeniably he was a scamp, but he did less harm than many men of impeccable rectitude.

The Emperor Alexander, who was his own foreign minister, was quite a match for these able men. Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand all unsuccessfully tried to influence him; the King of Prussia followed him blindly, even against the advice of his own Ministers. In after years, it is true, Metternich acquired an ascendancy over the opinions of Alexander, but that belongs to a later phase of his character; in 1814 he still retained complete independence of judgment. He had learned diplomacy in a hard school. His grandmother was the enlightened and dissolute Catherine the Great; his father was the mad Tsar Paul. His

¹ Writing to Louis XVIII in 1815, he speaks of 'that sentiment of religious indifference which is the malady of the times in which we live'.

grandmother took him away from his parents at birth, and saw to his education herself. Perceiving that Paul was not going to make a good Emperor, she wished to pass him over and make Alexander her successor. When he was not yet quite eighteen, his grandmother communicated this project to him in writing, and it was necessary for him to reply by letter. Placed thus between an aged autocrat and a frenzied psychopath, many boys would have had difficulty in finding a suitable epistolary style. Not so Alexander. He wrote:

24 September 1796.

Your Imperial Majesty!

I could never express my gratitude for the confidence with which your Majesty has been willing to honour me and the goodness which you have deigned to have in making by your own hand a writing serving as explanation of the other papers. I hope that your Majesty will see, by my zeal in deserving your precious favours, that I feel all their value. I could not, it is true, ever pay sufficiently, even by my blood, for all that you have deigned and still intend to do for me. These papers evidently confirm all the reflections which your Majesty has been good enough to communicate to me recently, and which, if it is permitted to me to say so, could not be more just. It is in placing once more at the feet of Your Imperial Majesty the sentiments of my most lively gratitude that I take the liberty of being, with the most profound respect and the most inviolable attachment,

of Your Imperial Majesty the very humble and very submissive subject and grandson

Alexander

Truly a model grandson! At the same time, if the letter was seen by his father (as some maintain), there was nothing in it to show that as a son he was less dutiful than as a grandson. After such a training, he need not fear to be hoodwinked by either Metternich or Talleyrand.

From a scholastic point of view, Alexander's education was much better than that of most princes. In the middle of the campaign of 1812, he would converse with silly young ladies about Kant and Pestalozzi. Catherine had him indoctrinated with eighteenth-century enlightenment, and even with political liberalism; nor did she change the principles of his education after the French Revolution had turned her into a reactionary.

His tutor was a virtuous Swiss named La Harpe, who filled his conscious mind with rational benevolence while his father and grandmother were poisoning his unconscious. La Harpe believed in democracy, admired (within reason) the French Revolution, and at first thought well of Napoleon. His rectitude was of a somewhat pedantic kind: on purely legalistic grounds he opposed Catherine's scheme for passing over Paul, although Paul hated him and Alexander loved him, and although it was evident that Paul could do nothing but harm to Russia. This led Catherine to dismiss La Harpe, although her intention to disinherit Paul was never carried out. She took, however, certain preliminary steps. She declared Alexander's education finished, and compelled him to marry at the age of sixteen, in order that he might seem grown up.

Paul reigned for four years, which, for Alexander as for all Russia, were years of terror. At last a plot was formed by his immediate *entourage* for his assassination. Alexander was informed of the plot, and begged the conspirators, if possible, to dethrone his father without killing him. This would have been difficult and dangerous; they therefore murdered Paul and left Alexander to make the best of it. Those most obviously implicated were banished from Court, but as little as possible was done in the way of punishment. All Russia heaved a sigh of relief, and welcomed Alexander with joy; his complicity was hushed up, and, though suspected, was not known for certain until more than a century later. This incident made a wound in his conscience which never healed, and had much to do with the curious and rather sinister forms of his later religiosity. This effect, however, was scarcely visible before the year 1815; from then until his death in 1825, Alexander sank into an ever-deepening gloom, until at last he became a perfect example of a modern Orestes.

What the world saw of Alexander during the first half of his reign was something very different. He was gay and gallant, rather too well dressed, liberal in his politics, and anxious that his reign should be associated with the furtherance of idealistic aims. He had a principal mistress of whom he was very fond and by whom he had several children. His affection for his sister Catherine was more passionate than is customary. He was never too busy to write to her, and his letters to her show a complete unreserve which makes them very valuable historically. He was grateful to her for making friends with his mistress, and

was in an alliance with her against their mother. He enjoyed showering upon her hyperbolic expressions of affection, such as: 'Adieu, charm of my eyes, adoration of my heart, lustre of the age, phenomenon of Nature, or, better than all that, Bisiam Bisiamovna with the flattened nose.' (This was written just before the battle of Austerlitz.) Catherine was a lively and tactless young lady, and on at least one occasion (when Alexander visited England in 1814) her influence led him astray politically, with important consequences for the affairs of Europe. They were always on the best of terms except during Napoleon's advance in 1812, when she joined in the patriotic outcry against her brother's apparent lack of success.

When Alexander came to the throne in the year 1801, he was only twenty-two years old, and had little knowledge of affairs. He recalled La Harpe, and endeavoured to introduce reforms by the help of a Council composed of his personal friends. He succeeded in undoing the evils wrought by Paul, relaxed the censorship, and improved education. But when it came to such matters as the emancipation of the serfs or the introduction of a constitution, he found the difficulties too formidable. As regards foreign affairs, he at first made friends with Napoleon, whom La Harpe still admired. But when Napoleon bullied Switzerland and made himself Emperor, which offended La Harpe both as patriot and as democrat, Alexander turned against him, and fought the unfortunate campaigns of 1805 and 1806, in which the Russians, in alliance first with Austria and then with Prussia, suffered the defeats of Austerlitz and Friedland. This led to the Peace of Tilsit, and to a sudden friendship between the Eastern and Western Emperors. At first there was a honeymoon atmosphere, and each believed the other to be sincere. But as soon as they had parted, disputes began. Alexander, who had been fighting the Turks, wanted to keep Moldavia and Wallachia; Napoleon did not wish to offend the Turks, for fear of throwing them into the arms of the English. He therefore demanded a *quid pro quo* at the expense of Prussia, to which Alexander could not agree on account of his promises to the beautiful Queen Louise. At last Napoleon endeavoured to dazzle Alexander by a grandiose project of the partition of Turkey leading on to the joint conquest of India. The boyish part of Alexander, which enjoyed the Arabian Nights, was fascinated, and responded as Napoleon had hoped. But his shrewdness could not be put to sleep. He stipulated that he should have not only Moldavia and

Wallachia, but also Constantinople. After that, he would be prepared to help Napoleon in Syria; but he must secure his own gains first. As agreement by letter proved impossible, the two sovereigns agreed to meet at Erfurt, where Napoleon hoped to prevail by personal influence. He underestimated Alexander, however, who wrote to his sister: 'Bonaparte gives out that I am only a fool. He laughs best who laughs last, and for my part I put all my hope in God.' The mere fact that he spoke of 'Bonaparte' instead of 'Napoleon' implied a feeling of hostility, and would have made all friendship impossible if it had been known.

Meanwhile Alexander employed the period of apparent friendship with France to conquer Finland, which belonged to Sweden. That done, he bought the friendship of Sweden by promising to help the Swedes to acquire Norway, which belonged to Denmark, which was friendly to France. After this, since Napoleon still would not help him to get Moldavia and Wallachia, he felt that the friendship of France served no further purpose. When Napoleon complained that six hundred British ships had sailed up the Gulf of Finland and landed British goods in Russia, Alexander contented himself with a blunt denial. The Grand Army marched to Moscow and perished in the retreat; Europe greeted Alexander as her saviour, and the triumphant Allies marched to Paris. In all this Alexander saw the hand of God, since he could not attribute the victory to himself or his generals. The Prussians saw the victory of moral force against the corruption and atheism of France. The Austrians saw the vindication of ancient right. The English saw the victory of sea power and cheap manufactures. The world in general saw the hope of peace. Such was the situation at the opening of our epoch.

CHAPTER TWO

The Congress of Vienna

ALEXANDER, Frederick William, Metternich, and Castlereagh held collectively the power to decide the map of Europe and to establish whatever form of government they chose, both internationally and in the several countries of the Continent. Certain treaties limited their freedom. During 1813, first Russia, then England, then Austria, had promised Prussia that she should again become as great as before Napoleon defeated her in 1806. The Treaty of Paris (May 30, 1814) assigned to France the limits of 1792; all the conquests of the revolutionary and Napoleonic epoch were renounced, and the right to dispose of them to new owners was one from which France was to be excluded in the deliberations of the Congress. In view of the fact that France was completely at the mercy of the Allies after twenty-two years of war, during which almost every continental country had suffered invasion, the *mildness* of the Treaty of Paris was surprising; it was largely due to the magnanimity of Alexander. He had marched into Paris at the head of the armies, had declared that the enemy was Napoleon, not France, and had accepted the *semi-voluntary* restoration of the Bourbons by the French Provincial Government as a ground for not depriving France of any of the territory previously possessed by the legitimate kings.

Alexander's generosity was vehemently resisted by his closest allies, the Prussians, and was a cause of anxiety to the English. On January 30, 1814, Castlereagh wrote to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool:

I think our greatest danger at present is from the *chevaleresque* tone in which the Emperor Alexander is disposed to push the war. He has a *personal* feeling about Paris, distinct from all political or military combinations. He seems to seek for the occasion of entering with his magnificent guards the enemy's capital, probably to display, in his clemency and forbearance, a contrast to that desolation to which his own was devoted.

In this wish Alexander was fully gratified, and the people of Paris displayed, in consequence, all the enthusiasm for him that he could desire. The other Allies remarked that, if France had been compelled to cede more territory, it would not have been acquired by Russia, and that the Emperor was less generous in matters nearer home, such as Poland. But these reflections were made only by the initiated, and did not affect the warmth of popular demonstrations.

The territorial questions to be decided at the Congress of Vienna were many and complex. It was felt that perhaps it might be a help to have some sort of principle by which the decisions arrived at could be made to seem just. Metternich's colleague, Gentz, who had the reputation of being the hardest worker at the Congress, stated his impressions in a memorandum of February 12, 1815:

Those who at the time of the assembling of the Congress at Vienna had thoroughly understood the nature and objects of this Congress, could hardly have been mistaken about its course, whatever their opinion about its results might be. The grand phrases of 'reconstruction of social order,' 'regeneration of the political system of Europe,' 'a lasting peace founded on a just division of strength,' &c., &c., were uttered to tranquillise the people, and to give an air of dignity and grandeur to this solemn assembly; but the real purpose of the Congress was to divide amongst the conquerors the spoils taken from the vanquished.

But this could hardly be openly avowed; moreover, on most questions there were some Powers whose interests were not involved, and who might therefore be influenced by arguments of principle. In this situation, it was Talleyrand who discovered the only moral appeal to which the Congress was not deaf. For this purpose, he invented the 'principle of legitimacy,' which governed Europe until the year 1830. This he expounded in the instructions which he instructed Louis XVIII to give him for his own guidance. Having suffered military defeat, France was obliged to rely upon moral force; this Talleyrand supplied, no doubt to his own secret amusement.

The principle of legitimacy asserts, speaking broadly, that territories ought to belong to their hereditary sovereigns, unless voluntarily parted with in exchange for some compensation. On this ground, France, if governed by the Bourbons, had a right to

all territory that was French in the time of Louis XVI. But the principle had to be carefully stated. It would not do, for example, to suggest that the English ought to restore the Stuart dynasty. Then there was Genoa, which had been an independent republic before it was conquered by France, and which was now to be given to the King of Sardinia. The Genoese might have invoked the principle of legitimacy, but unfortunately invoked instead one belonging to a later Congress, namely the right of self-determination; and what was even worse, they were in favour of a democratic constitution. This was dangerous. Talleyrand says:

The Genoese had presented the project of a constitution which, owing to its democratic spirit, could not be admitted. But the capitulation is all the more necessary because the Genoese feel a singular reluctance to this act of submission, and because it is good to remove everywhere as much as is possible the germs of bitterness and discord which are multiplied at all points on the occasion of the union of the Belgians to the Dutch, the Saxons to the Prussians, and the Italians to the Austrians.

Legitimacy could not, therefore, be invoked by populations against princes. It would be too much to say that the principle could never be invoked by republics: it could be invoked by Switzerland, because of Alexander's affection for La Harpe. It could not be invoked by Poland, because Poland no longer had a legitimate king, and because the partition was not due to the French. Roughly speaking, territory was treated as we still treat landed estate: we do not think that the tenants of a landowner can acquire a right to own the land on which they live by merely deciding that they would like to do so. This would seem absurd to most men at the present day; and the principle of self-determination as regards government would have seemed equally absurd to the negotiators at Vienna. If a king had a hereditary right to a piece of territory, that gave him a claim of which the Congress was bound to take notice; if not, the territory could be assigned by bargaining among the Powers.

As we have seen in the case of Genoa, the Congress had a very definite dislike to anything that savoured of democracy. The British constitution was allowed to survive because it was traditional, and the French were given a constitution for a variety of reasons. Alexander was liberal outside Russia. The British thought that a constitution would reconcile France to the Bour-

bons and give stability to the dynasty. The Austrians and Prussians, after some hesitation, became persuaded that a constitution, being inherently pernicious, would weaken France, and prevent a recurrence of what had been suffered at the hands of Louis XIV and Napoleon. But constitutions elsewhere were not to be encouraged. In this matter, the Whigs in England were opposed to the Tory government. In Italy, Lord William Bentinck, a high-spirited Whig, and too important to be summarily dismissed, had caused his government much trouble by encouraging the Genoese and protesting against the atrocities committed by the King of Sicily. Castlereagh writes to him on May 7, 1814:

It is impossible not to perceive a great moral change coming on in Europe, and that the principles of freedom are in full operation. The danger is, that the transition may be too sudden to ripen into anything likely to make the world better or happier. We have new constitutions launched in France, Spain, Holland, and Sicily. Let us see the result before we encourage farther attempts. The attempts may be made, and we must abide the consequences; but I am sure it is better to retard than accelerate the operation of this most hazardous principle which is abroad.

In Italy, it is now the more necessary to abstain, if we wish to act in concert with Austria and Sardinia. Whilst we had to drive the French out of Italy, we were justified in running all risks; but the present state of Europe requires no such expedient; and, with a view to general peace and tranquillity, I should prefer seeing the Italians await the insensible influence of what is going on elsewhere, than hazard their own internal quiet by an effort at this moment.

It may be said, in passing, that the constitutions of Spain and Sicily were quickly suppressed.

In contradistinction to the illiberality of the Western Powers, Alexander decided to give a constitution to Poland, or rather to that part of Poland which he finally obtained from the decisions of the Congress. The history of this constitution, however, shows that his liberalism was hardly more than a matter of phrases. The legislature was composed of two Houses, the Lower House consisting of seventy-one representatives of the land-owning nobility and fifty-one representatives of the towns. The Upper House consisted of the Imperial Family, some bishops, and

a few officials. The Parliament was to sit for thirty days once every two years; it could accept or reject measures proposed by the Government, but could not itself propose measures. At the first meeting of the Parliament, in 1818, all went well; both Houses accepted Alexander's measures, with the exception of one about divorce, as to which he made a gracious speech saying that he respected their principles and rejoiced in the proof of their independence. In 1820, however, they rejected all his proposals. He was furious, and decided, in spite of the constitution, that Parliament should not meet again till 1825. After this, it met only once, in 1829; in 1830 the Polish insurrection occurred, and from that time until the Great War, Russian Poland was governed autocratically by the Tsar. Nevertheless, at Vienna, Alexander made a great parade of his liberal intentions towards Poland, and of the advantages which that country would derive from being united under his rule.

The principle of legitimacy, suggested by Talleyrand, was thoroughly congenial to Metternich. There was, however, a difficulty in regard to Naples: Murat, its King, had been induced to abandon his brother-in-law Napoleon by a treaty in which Austria promised to maintain him on his throne. With Napoleon gone, this treaty no longer served any purpose, and Talleyrand strongly urged the claims of the legitimate Bourbon King Ferdinand. Fortunately this delicate problem was solved by Murat's indiscretions: when Napoleon returned from Elba, Murat repented of his previous treachery, and therefore fell when Napoleon fell. This left Metternich free to embrace the principle of legitimacy without reserve.

The attitude of the English to the principle was one of benevolence, so long as it was not allowed to conflict with any British interest. It could not, of course, apply to colonies: the British insisted upon acquiring permanently certain important Dutch colonies, which the Dutch had lost through their enforced alliance with France. The Prince of Orange was given Belgium in compensation, and was quite grateful, though he lost it in 1830. Outside Europe, and on the high seas, the British attitude was decided by British interests; but on the Continent, the principle of legitimacy would do well enough, since all questions of importance to England had been settled before the Congress began.

Prussia and Russia offered more opposition. The opposition of Russia was due in part to Alexander's vague liberalism, but in the main to the fact that his territorial ambitions were related in a

complicated way to those of Prussia. He had promised the King of Prussia as fine a domain as he had had before 1806. But before 1806 Prussia owned certain parts of Poland which Alexander wished to keep; therefore, said Alexander, Prussia must be compensated elsewhere. The most convenient plan was to give Saxony to Prussia, since the King of Saxony had failed to abandon Napoleon at the proper moment. But the King of Saxony was a legitimate sovereign: Louis XVIII and Talleyrand were outraged at the thought of his being dispossessed. Austria feared both Russia and Prussia, and therefore sided with France. England wished to strengthen Prussia and weaken Russia; therefore Castlereagh at first supported Prussia's claim to Saxony but opposed Russia's claim to practically the whole of Poland. When he found that it was impossible to support Prussia without supporting Russia, he decided against both, and joined Austria and France. This question absorbed most of the time of the Congress.

At the very beginning, on October 1, Talleyrand had an interview with Alexander, in which he maintained the ethical importance of the principle of legitimacy against what he represented as the Tsar's unscrupulousness. Alexander did not like Talleyrand, partly, no doubt, because he regarded him as a cynic, but more because, when the Russian Government protested against Napoleon's murder of the Duc d'Enghien, Talleyrand replied by a hint that it was not as bad as murdering one's father. On that occasion, as on this, he had been in a position of moral superiority to the highly religious Emperor, which must have amused him, but his amusement is not allowed to appear in the account which he gives in his *Mémoires* of the interview on October 1:

A. At present let us speak of our affairs. We must finish them here.

T. That depends upon Your Majesty. They will finish quickly and happily if Your Majesty brings to them the same nobility and the same greatness of soul as to those of France.

A. But each must find his interests (*convenances*) in the settlement.

T. And each his rights.

A. I shall keep what I occupy.

T. Your Majesty will only wish to keep what will be legitimately yours.

A. I am in agreement with the Great Powers.

T. I do not know whether Your Majesty counts France amongst these Powers.

A. Yes, certainly. But if you do not wish each to find his interests, what do you intend?

T. I put justice first, and interests afterwards.

A. The interests of Europe are justice.

T. This language, Sire, is not yours; it is foreign to you, and your heart disallows it.

A. No, I repeat, the interests of Europe are justice.

At this point Talleyrand turned to the wall, hit his head against it, and cried: 'Europe, Europe, unhappy Europe! Shall it be said that you have destroyed it?' Alexander replied: 'Rather war than renounce what I occupy.' Talleyrand continues:

I let my arms fall, and, in the attitude of a man afflicted but decided, who seemed to be saying 'the fault will not be ours,' I kept silence. The Emperor remained some instants without breaking it, then he repeated: 'Yes, rather war.' I kept the same attitude. Then, raising his hands and agitating them as I had never seen him do, in a manner which recalled to me the passage that terminates the eulogium of Marcus Aurelius, he shouted rather than said: 'The time for the theatre is come. I must go; I promised the Emperor [of Austria]; they are waiting for me.' And he went away; then, coming back, he took me in his two hands, pressed my body, and said in a voice which was no longer his own: 'Adieu, adieu, we shall see each other again.'

In spite of this affecting scene, the opposition between the two men continued throughout the Congress, and the points in dispute were finally decided by a compromise. Alexander got less of Poland than he had claimed, and Prussia got only half of Saxony, the other half being left to the legitimate King. This compromise was only reached after Napoleon's return from Elba compelled the Powers to compose their differences. But for this event, they might have continued to wrangle down to the present day.

The attitude of Prussia was superficially similar to that of the other Powers, but fundamentally very different. The Chancellor Hardenburg was, in the main, friendly to Austria; the King was

entirely devoted to Alexander. But there existed in Prussia a powerful nationalist movement, German rather than purely Prussian, and therefore viewed with sympathy by many people in other parts of Germany. After 1806, Prussia had embarked upon reforms, so far as Napoleon would permit. The patriotic Minister Stein, having incurred Napoleon's displeasure, had been forced to leave the country, and was, at the time of the Congress of Vienna, in the service of Alexander. But the Prussian army was filled with sentiment for Germany, and with a passionate hatred for the French. Ever since the time of Louis XIV, Western Germany, composed of a number of small weak States, had been at the mercy of France; Prussia had, under Frederick the Great, successfully withstood Louis XV, but had not been able to resist Napoleon. It had become clear to all patriotic Germans that some degree of unity was necessary if future French invasions were to be made impossible; but to all projects of unity the tenacious princelings offered an obstacle.

Thus German patriotism combined with hatred of the French to produce throughout the educated classes, and especially among the young, a feeling in favour of Prussia, as the most effective bulwark of Germany against France. This feeling was, of course, hostile to the principle of legitimacy, which would perpetuate the petty principalities that made Germany weak. German patriotism was thus compelled to be in some degree revolutionary, and, in this respect, was suspect to governments, even to that of Prussia; but it was encouraged by Prussia in so far as it stood for Prussian greatness. Opposition to the Princes gave a democratic tinge to Teutonic nationalism, which had caused the King of Prussia, during the height of the struggle in 1813, to promise a constitution as the reward of victory. The hope that this promise might be fulfilled had to be kept alive until Frederick William had derived all possible advantage from the warlike exertions of his subjects, but it had to be kept alive discreetly, so as not to alarm the other autocrats. After Waterloo, of course, little more was heard of it.

Talleyrand, on arriving in Vienna, was astonished by the new German patriotism. France, he confesses, had behaved as an insolent conqueror, and had overwhelmed the conquered with contributions. (It was Napoleon's principle to make his victims pay for his wars.) They were indignant at the mildness of the Treaty of Paris, and, as Talleyrand puts it, 'very *blasé* to the delights to be derived from generosity.' The nationalism of

Germany appears to him as Jacobinism. He says that Jacobinism dominates not the middle and lower classes, but the highest and richest nobility, with whom conspire, he says, the men of the universities, and the young men imbued with their theories, who deplore the division of Germany into small States. 'The unity of the German Fatherland is their cry, their dogma, their religion exalted up to fanaticism, and this fanaticism has gained even princes actually reigning.' German unity, he thinks, would not have been dangerous to France while she possessed the left bank of the Rhine and Belgium, but would now be very serious for her. It was accordingly his business to combat all approaches to German unity, and in this respect the principle of legitimacy was useful. Metternich, from fear of Prussia, was at one with him in this.

Prussia thus became the more or less half-hearted champion of a new principle, that of nationality, which appeared to the older diplomats to be full of revolutionary danger. It cannot be said that the older diplomats were wrong. What Talleyrand calls the 'Jacobinism' of the German patriots led straight on to the Great War, by a movement which, in retrospect, acquires a perhaps fallacious appearance of inevitability. At the Congress of Vienna, the German patriots were ahead of their time; but from 1848 onward their point of view increasingly dominated the world.

There were in this new doctrine of German nationalism various distinct elements. There was the purely German element: the belief in the superior virtue and virility of the German race. There was the belief that the boundaries of States should be the boundaries of nations. And there was the democratic belief that populations should have a right to choose their own form of Government. All these were anathema to the orthodoxy of 1815.

The right of populations to choose their own form of government was upheld by the Tsar as regards France, at the time of Napoleon's fall in 1814. Gentz, expressing the view of the Austrian Government, said that if the French were allowed to appoint another ruler this would involve 'a recognition of the principle which in our times can hardly be uttered without trembling, that it depends upon the people whether they shall or shall not tolerate the actual ruling sovereign. This principle of popular sovereignty is the very pivot of all revolutionary systems.'

The belief that the boundaries of States should be the boundaries of nations was necessarily abhorrent to Austria. If this principle were to be victorious, a small part of the Emperor

Francis's dominions would become incorporated in a United Germany, Galicia would become part of a reunited Poland, while Bohemia and Transylvania would be independent. As a result of nationalism, all this has happened since the Great War,¹ except, of course, the part favourable to Germany. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the Austrian Government was opposed to German nationalism.

The belief in the superior virtue and virility of the German race was generated by the struggle with Napoleon, and especially by the campaign of 1813, which plays the same part in German popular history as the Spanish Armada plays in that of the English, or the War of Liberation in that of the Americans. The generation that was young in the Germany of 1813, and those older men whom it recognized as its leaders, would have nothing to do with cosmopolitanism, and reacted in every way against the classicism of the eighteenth century. The romantic movement in Germany, unlike that in England, was in close touch with actual politics, and had realizable ideals; indeed its ideals were realized by Bismarck. During the romantic movement, men admired excitedly, and more than reason could warrant. Shelley admired Greek rebels against the Turks and Spanish rebels against the Bourbons, but the German romanticists admired Blücher, that stern man of God, who occupies in German legend the place occupied by Drake in that of England.

Since Blücher became a German national hero, it is worth while to dwell for a moment upon his character. He was a great soldier, an ardent patriot, and a completely loyal servant of his King. His religion was sincere and profound. His attitude to France was one of moral reprobation. During the Waterloo campaign, while the issue was still in doubt, he wrote: 'I hope that this war will be concluded in such a way that in the future France will no longer be so dangerous to Germany. Alsace and Lorraine must be surrendered to us.' In this connection, Treitschke, the standard historian of nineteenth-century Germany, speaks of Blücher as 'a cosmopolitan in the noblest sense of the word,' who possessed 'a reckless self-forgetfulness which was possible only to German idealism.'

Very characteristic was Blücher's attitude to the Saxon mutineers in his army of 1815. Part of Saxony was being restored to the King of Saxony, part was being given to Prussia; accordingly part of the Saxon army was incorporated with the army of Prussia.

¹ Of 1914-18.

A sentiment of loyalty to their own King and country led some of these Saxon troops to refuse to take orders from Blücher. He suppressed the mutiny with extreme severity, and on this occasion wrote as follows to King Frederick Augustus of Saxony:

Your Majesty,

By your earlier proceedings your majesty has brought the profoundest disaster upon your subjects, a respected branch of the German nation.

It may result from your subsequent conduct that this branch will be overwhelmed with shame.

The rebellion in the army, which has been organized from Friedrichsfelde and Pressburg, has broken out, has broken out at a time when the whole of Germany is rising against the common enemy. The criminal offenders have openly proclaimed Bonaparte as their protector, and have forced me, who during five-and-fifty years of active service have been in the fortunate position of never shedding any blood but that of my enemies, for the first time to carry out executions in my army.

By the enclosure, your majesty will see what I have hitherto done in the hope of saving the honour of the Saxon name, but it is the last attempt.

If my voice is not heard, I shall be compelled, not without pain, but with the repose of my own good conscience and sense of duty fulfilled, to restore order by force, and, if it should be necessary, to have the entire Saxon army shot down.

The blood that has been spilled will one day at God's judgment-seat be visited upon him who is responsible: and before the throne of the Almighty to have given commands, and to have allowed commands to be given, will be regarded as identical.

Your majesty is well aware that an old man of seventy-three can no longer have any other earthly desire than to make the voice of truth audible and to make the right prevail.

For this reason your majesty will have to receive this letter.

BLÜCHER.

Headquarters at Liège,
May 6, 1815.

His ways of expressing affection were peculiar. When his wife died, he observed: 'Yes, the toad was beautiful like the deuce, and she had the feeling of a thousand devils.' A rather similar type of sentiment is shown in a remark he made to Metternich

in the grand gallery of Napoleon's palace at Saint Cloud, which he and his hussars were occupying after Waterloo. 'That man,' he said, 'must have been a regular fool to have all this and go running after Moscow.' He was disappointed that the 'regular fool' was allowed such an easy fate as exile to St Helena, and had tried to get him put to death. Wellington would have nothing to do with this plan, as appears in a letter he wrote on June 28th, when Napoleon was still at large:

The Parisians think the Jacobins will give him [Napoleon] over to me, believing that I will save his life. Blücher writes to kill him; but I have told him that I shall remonstrate, and shall insist on his being disposed of by common accord. I have likewise said that, as a private friend, I advised him to have nothing to do with so foul a transaction—that he and I had acted too distinguished parts in these transactions to become executioners—and that I was determined that, if the Sovereigns wished to put him to death, they should employ an executioner, who should not be me.

Those who remember the Hang-the-Kaiser election at the end of the Great War, the popular feeling at that time, and the speeches of our leading statesmen, will realize how much Prussia was ahead of the world in 1815, and how antiquated scruples such as the Duke's were to seem to a later generation.

Whatever may be thought of the political ideas associated with the German renaissance of the early nineteenth century, it must be admitted that, as regards the contributions of great individuals to culture, Germany at that time led the world. Kant and Hegel, Goethe and Schiller, are hard to match among their non-German contemporaries. Kant and Goethe, it is true, owed their greatness in part to their freedom from German nationalistic excitement, and some of their best qualities were felt to be regrettable by subsequent generations of Germans. Kant admired Rousseau, and liked the French Revolution; he wrote a treatise advocating 'the unmanly dream of perpetual peace,' as it is called by Treitschke. As for Goethe, the sound of the guns at the battle of Jena roused in him philosophic, not patriotic, emotions, and he could subsequently visit the battlefield in the company of Frenchmen without a qualm. Kant and Goethe were great men, but they would not have liked the use to which they have been put by German nationalism. Most of the great Germans subsequent to them have,

it is true, been filled with patriotism, and not without justification. Throughout the whole period from the fall of Napoleon to the Great War, Germany retained its supremacy in science and in almost all forms of learning. Not only in science, but in many other respects also, Germany's outlook in 1815 was more akin to that of the next hundred years than was that of any other country. As Treitschke says:

For the first time since the days of Martin Luther, the ideas of Germany once more made the round of the world, and now found a more willing acceptance than of old had the ideas of the Reformation. Germany alone had already got completely beyond the view of the world-order characteristic of the eighteenth century. The sensualism of the days of enlightenment had been replaced by an idealist philosophy; the dominion of reason by a profound religious sentiment; cosmopolitanism by a delight in national peculiarity; natural rights by a recognition of the living growth of the nations; the rules of correct art by free poesy, bubbling up as by natural energy from the depths of the soul; the preponderance of the exact sciences by the new historico-aesthetic culture. By the work of three generations, those of the classical and of the romanticist poets, this world of new ideas had slowly attained to maturity, whereas among the neighbour nations it had hitherto secured no more than isolated disciples, and only now at length made its way victoriously through all the lands.

At the same period, as Treitschke also points out, the Inquisition and the Index were re-introduced by the Pope, and Bible societies were declared to be the work of the devil, while in Southern France at the Restoration 'the Catholic mob stormed the houses of the Protestants and murdered the heretics to the cry of "Let us make black puddings of Calvin's blood!"'

The statesmen assembled at the Congress of Vienna, while personally enlightened and civilized, did nothing to discourage such black reaction, but were terrified by the new ideas in Germany. Metternich, in particular, set himself to prolong the eighteenth century in Germany, and succeeded in suppressing all overt liberalism until 1848.

The Congress of Vienna was eighteenth-century in tone, and German democratic nationalism, where it intruded, seemed to belong to a later age. Another question that was discussed at

Vienna seems equally out of the picture, namely the slave trade. This subject, which was the first to rouse nineteenth-century philanthropy, was brought up by England, and was viewed with complete cynicism by all the other Powers. In England the sentiment for the abolition of the slave trade was overwhelming, and Castlereagh, whatever he may have privately thought, was obliged to listen with respect to Wilberforce and Clarkson, the champions of abolition. The British had abolished their own slave trade, and endeavoured to induce other Powers to undertake that they would abolish theirs within five years. To the amazement of such men as Talleyrand, it was found that for such an undertaking the British Government was willing to give a solid *quid pro quo* in territory or cash, while a refusal was likely to lead to unfriendly commercial discrimination. The following letter, from Castlereagh to the British Ambassador at Madrid, is typical of many:

St. James's Square, August 1, 1814.

My dear Sir,

... You must really press the Spanish Government to give us some more facilities on the subject of the Slave Trade, else we can do nothing for them, however well inclined: the nation is bent upon this object. I believe there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned upon it; both Houses of Parliament are pledged to press it; and the Ministers must make it the basis of their policy. It is particularly important that Spain and Portugal should not separate from all Europe upon it, else prohibitions against the import of their colonial produce will be the probable result. Urge, therefore, the French engagement for five years, and prevail upon them to instruct Labrador [the representative of Spain at Vienna] accordingly.

With respect to the immediate abolition north of the Line, if you cannot confine them to the southward of Cape Lopez, or Lope Gonsalves, press Cape Formoso, or even three points a little to the westward of Cape Coast Castle; but Lopez is the best, as ships having cargoes may from thence keep at once free of the coast.

You will recollect that Spain had no Slave Trade of her own, previous to our abolition; and it now appears that she imports few really for her own colonies. The greatest proportion of those carried in the first instance to Cuba and Porto Rico, are re-shipped on American account, and smuggled into the United

States, principally up the Mississippi, in defiance of the American laws of abolition. A mutual right of search is of great importance to check abuse.

The English attitude about the slave trade is a psychological curiosity, since the very men who did most for its abolition opposed every attempt to mitigate the horrors of English industrialism. The only concession that such men as Wilberforce were prepared to make on the subject of child labour was that children should have time on Sundays to learn the truths of the Christian religion. Towards English children they were pitiless; towards negroes they were full of compassion. I do not care to suggest an explanation, since the only ones that occur to me are intolerably cynical. But the fact deserves to be noticed, as an outstanding example of the complexity of human sentiment.

Until 1919, it was customary to regard the Congress of Vienna as a failure, but the world has now acquired a higher standard of failure. In spite of its shortcomings, there were two important respects in which the decisions arrived at deserved the gratitude of Europe. The first of these was the tolerant attitude towards France. After the hundred days, it is true, a somewhat greater severity was felt to be necessary. An indemnity was imposed, and Allied troops were left in occupation of important posts in France. But within a few years the indemnity was paid and the troops were withdrawn, with the result that France felt no lasting bitterness towards the victors.

The second advantage which Europe derived from the Congress was the establishment of an international government as a means of preserving peace. It is true that the government was temporary and that its measures were bad; nevertheless, it gave Europe a breathing space after the twenty-three years of warfare. Russia, Prussia, Austria and England—to whom France was afterwards joined—agreed to meet in Congresses from time to time to regulate the affairs of the world. Partly as a result of this arrangement, no important war occurred for thirty-nine years.

CHAPTER THREE

The Holy Alliance

To repeat a successful performance is always risky. When the Allies entered Paris in 1814, the foremost place belonged to Alexander; but when they entered Paris in 1815, his glory was eclipsed by that of Wellington and Blücher, who, without his help or that of Austria, had finally defeated the greatest military genius of modern times. However, if earthly glory failed, heavenly glory was still attainable. About this time, Alexander became much more religious than he had been.

From various ladies of his acquaintance, he had heard much of a remarkable prophetess, the Baroness Krüdener. This excellent lady, now in her fifty-second year, had not always devoted herself to the religious life. She had had a gay and chequered youth, although she assures us that her higher nature never wholly slept, and that, amid all the luxury and senseless pleasures of Copenhagen, she remained single and true, and always in harmony with nature. In 1789 she decided to leave Copenhagen (where her husband was the Russian Ambassador), in order to live in harmony with nature in Paris. In a few months, however, she ran up a bill of £800 with Marie Antoinette's dress-maker, which, together with other causes, led her to move to Montpellier.

After the King's flight to Varennes, as he had made use of the passport of a friend of hers, she felt it prudent to leave France, which she did in the company of her lover disguised as a valet. She presented him to her husband with a frank explanation, but the experiment was not a success. 'M. de Krüdener,' she remarks on a later occasion, 'appreciates no sort of domestic happiness; he is more bent than ever on dinners, visits, theatricals, etc.' In spite of this insensibility on his part, she lived with him in Berlin, where he was now Ambassador. She believed that she brought him good fortune, and that 'God has wished to bless my husband since my return to him. . . . Why should I not believe that a pious heart, which prays to God with simplicity and con-

fidence for grace to contribute to the happiness of another, obtains that for which it asks?' Nevertheless, in 1801 she finally left the worthy Baron, and if God blessed him after that, it must have been in other ways.

Her conversion occurred in 1805, when she was staying with her mother in Riga. A young man who was in love with her took off his hat to her, and instantly dropped dead. This made her profoundly unhappy, from the thought that it might have happened to her. Before long, however, noticing that her shoemaker looked happy, she asked him why, and he said it was because he was a Moravian Brother and given to reading the Bible. She tried his recipe and found it a success. 'You have no notion,' she writes, 'of the happiness which I gain from this holy and sublime faith. . . . Love, ambition, success, seem to me mere folly; exaggerated affections, even when lawful, seem to me as nothing compared to the pure and celestial happiness which comes from on high.'

The opportunity which gave her a place in history came after she had been living a religious life for ten years. Having a premonition that she was destined to meet her Tsar, she settled, in the spring of 1815, in a village on the road from Vienna to the Russian army. At last, on the fourth of June, as Alexander was hurrying from the Congress to place himself at the head of his troops, he found himself one evening at Heilbronn, close to where she was staying. He had heard much of her, but did not know that she was in the neighbourhood. Too weary to read, too troubled to sleep, he remembered what he had been told about her, and wished for an opportunity to make her acquaintance. At this moment she was announced.

She wasted no time. She told him that he was a sinner, that he had not yet sufficiently humbled himself before God, that she also had been a great sinner, but that she had found pardon for her sins at the foot of the Cross of Christ. Alexander replied: 'You have made me discover things in myself which I had never seen. I give thanks for it to God; but I feel the want of many such conversations, and I beg of you not to go far away.' She obeyed the Imperial commands, and throughout the succeeding months was never far distant from her august penitent.

The offspring of their virtue was the Holy Alliance. This curious document was drawn up by Alexander in September 1815, and was intended to embody the application to politics of the great religious truths which he had learnt from the Baroness.

He submitted the draft to her, accepted respectfully her suggested emendations, and then took it at once to the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia. The signatures of other European Sovereigns were to be obtained as soon as possible. (The Sultan, however, not being a Christian, could not be asked to sign.)

The following is the text of the Holy Alliance as signed by Alexander, Francis, and Frederick William on September 26th:

In the Name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Their Majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, in consequence of the great events which have occurred in Europe in the course of the last three years, and especially in consequence of the benefits which a divine Providence has been pleased to confer on those states whose governments have placed their confidence and hope solely in it, having become profoundly convinced that it is necessary to base the principles of conduct to be adopted by the Powers in their mutual relations on the sublime truths contained in the eternal religion of Christ our Saviour; declare solemnly that the present act has for its sole object to manifest, in the face of the universe, their unalterable determination to adopt as their rule of conduct, whether in the administration of their respective states or in their political relations with all other governments, no other principles than those of their holy religion, precepts of justice, of charity, and of peace, which, far from being exclusively applicable to private life, ought, on the contrary, directly to influence the resolutions of princes and guide all their decisions, as offering the only means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.

In consequence their Majesties have adopted the following articles:—

Art. I. In accordance with the words of Holy Scripture, which command all men to regard one another as brothers, the three contracting monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble brotherhood, and, regarding each other as compatriots, they will lend one another aid and succour in all places, and under all circumstances; believing themselves to be placed towards their subjects and their armies in the position of a father towards his children, they will direct them in a similar spirit of brotherhood, for the protection of religion, peace, and justice.

Art. II. As a result, the only principle in operation, either

between the said governments or between their subjects will be that of rendering reciprocal service; to display to one another, by an unalterable good-will, the mutual affection with which each should be animated; to regard one another without exception as members of one and the same Christian nationality; the three allied princes themselves only considering themselves as delegated by Providence to govern three branches of one and the same family, to wit:

Austria,

Prussia,

Russia;

thus confessing that the Christian nation of which they and their people form a part has really no other sovereign than Him to whom alone supreme power belongs, because in Him alone are contained all the treasures of love, of knowledge, and of infinite wisdom, that is to say in God, our divine Saviour Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.

Their Majesties consequently recommend to their people with the most earnest solicitude, as being the only means of enjoying that peace that is born of a good conscience, and which alone is lasting, daily to fortify themselves more and more in the principles and practice of those duties which our divine Saviour imposed on mankind.

Art. III. All the Powers that may wish solemnly to avow the sacred principles by which this act is inspired, and that recognize how important it is to the happiness of nations so long distracted that in future these truths should exercise their due influence over the destinies of man, will be received with much ardour and affection into this Holy Alliance.

Signed in Paris in the year of grace 1815 the 14 (26) September.

(Signed) François.

Frédéric-Guillaume.

Alexandre.

The other sovereigns and statesmen had no very high opinion of the Holy Alliance. It was decided that, while the affairs of Europe should still be regulated by the Four-Power Alliance inaugurated at Chaumont, Louis XVIII should be allowed to join the Holy Alliance, since its significance was religious and not of this world. Metternich's view, as he told Castlereagh, was that Alexander's mind was affected; the Emperor Francis, taking this view, thought it wiser to humour him by signing. The British

Government refused to join the Holy Alliance, but the Prince Regent—that earnest Christian—wrote a letter to the Tsar expressing sympathy with his sentiments. When Alexander came to speak to Castlereagh about the Alliance, it happened that Wellington was present. Both of them (so Castlereagh wrote to Lord Liverpool) had difficulty in preserving becoming gravity while the Emperor was explaining the matter. It is interesting to note that Alexander's conversion was universally recognized as a victory for the reactionaries, and that the reactionaries themselves, all of whom professed Christianity, regarded the proposal to live according to its principles as a proof of insanity.

Formally, the Holy Alliance itself had no influence on the course of events, which were regulated by the Congresses of the Great Powers provided for in the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna. But in fact, during the fifteen years of black reaction from 1815 to 1830, popular sentiment did not go astray in regarding all the suppression of liberty that took place as the work of the Holy Alliance. Alexander, as a result of his conversion, ceased to be liberal, and consequently fell more and more under the influence of Metternich. Metternich's power in Europe would have been less but for the timely intervention of Madame Krüdener. The Tsar, it is true, tired of her before long, but replaced her by other religious mentors who were even more pernicious. There is a similarity between the relation of Alexander to Madame Krüdener and that of Nicholas II to Rasputin. There is also a difference: the one is comedy and the other tragedy. But the comedy ceases when we pass from the person of the Tsar to the world at large. Neapolitan patriots died or suffered life-long imprisonment, Russian soldiers were flogged to death, Greeks were impaled, because Alexander's tender conscience demanded these sacrifices. Before he found salvation he was humane; afterwards, he sank gradually into greater and greater depths of cruelty.

The Congresses that carried on the system inaugurated by Vienna were: Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1818; Troppau and Laibach (which were virtually one), in 1820-1; and Verona, in 1822.

Aix-la-Chapelle, which Metternich described as 'a very pretty little Congress,' was largely concerned with the affairs of France. It was agreed that within two months the foreign troops should evacuate French territory. Russia, Austria, Prussia, and England renewed the treaty of Chaumont, by which, in 1814, they had bound themselves to oppose any government in France which was

a menace to other countries. But, that done, France was admitted to the Concert of the Great Powers, and ceased to be regarded with suspicion. A secret protocol decided that any one of the five Powers could, in the event of any revolutionary disturbance, appeal to the other four, which should not fail to give their help. Congresses were to meet periodically, and also on occasion of any crisis. Thus the international government had its legislative and its executive; its constitution was the principle of legitimacy.

The Congresses of Troppau and Laibach had occasion to make important practical applications of the principles agreed upon at Aix-la-Chapelle. Various alarming occurrences had been disturbing the peace of mind of the sovereigns and their ministers. In Spain, the army had mutinied and forced the King to renew the constitution of 1812. This was the occasion which inspired Shelley's Ode to Liberty, beginning:

A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations, Liberty.

But lightning is a dangerous thing, and Russia, Prussia and Austria decided that it should be prevented. This, however, was no simple matter. Portugal followed the example of Spain. Naples, which concerned Metternich more nearly, rebelled against Ferdinand, and made him swear to observe the new constitution which was extorted from him. England, which had from the first viewed with suspicion the reactionary politics of the Eastern Powers, refused to co-operate in suppressing the revolutions. France, which had been compelled by the Allies to accept a parliamentary régime, was not at all sure that Spain ought not to have a Parliament, and was quite sure that, if there was to be intervention in Spain, it should be a purely French intervention. The Eastern Powers feared that, if French troops came in contact with Spanish revolutionaries, their own revolutionary traditions might revive. The English vetoed all action in Portugal. Metternich was determined that only Austrian troops should go to Naples, which caused fears of Austrian aggrandisement in the minds of others.

In spite of these difficulties, the work of reaction was accomplished, except in Portugal. A change of ministry in France gave power to the extreme conservatives, who caused French troops to invade Spain in 1822 and restore the absolute government of the King. In Naples the matter was accomplished more

quickly. Ferdinand escaped to the Papal States, and invoked the help of the Austrians; his irresponsible power was restored, with all the usual atrocities of a White Terror. These incidents were a lesson to liberals, and kept them quiet on the Continent for some years.

The part played by Alexander, who had been himself a liberal, is psychologically interesting. It was fortunate for Metternich that, at the crucial moment, a mutiny occurred in the Semionovsky regiment, of which Alexander had, till then, thought very highly. It was a very mild mutiny, occasioned by the intolerable brutality of a new Colonel. The Emperor, while letting it appear as if he were leaving the matter to his minister Arakcheev, in fact concerned himself personally with the punishment of the mutineers, and insisted upon sentences of incredible severity under a hypocritical form of clemency. For example: 'H.M. the Emperor, in consideration both of the long preventive detention of the undermentioned men, and of their record of service under fire, deigns to spare them the degrading penalty of the knout, and to cause to be inflicted upon each of them six thousand strokes of the rod, after which they shall be sent to forced labour in the mines.'

At practically the same moment he was writing to his religious friend Prince Golitzin:

I abandon myself completely to *His direction*, to *His determinations*, and it is *He* who *ordains* and *places* matters; I merely follow in complete abandonment, persuaded as I am in my heart that this can only lead to the goal which His economy has decided for the common good.

These pious reflections, written at the time of the Congress of Laibach, occur in a long letter justifying his policy towards Naples which the Prince had ventured to criticize. Alexander professes himself at a loss to imagine the reason for criticism, which cannot spring 'from a belief on your part that the disorganizing principles which, in less than six months, have revolutionized three countries, and which threaten to spread and embrace all Europe, should be quietly endured.' For these principles, he continues, are directed not only against thrones, but against the Christian religion. He then proceeds to compare the King of Naples to Judith and the Neapolitan revolutionaries to Holofernes, in order to prove that God can give the victory to the

weaker party; and he quotes letters from Ferdinand saying that his sole trust is in God. (Ferdinand was running no risk unless he chose to commit perjury, since the constitutionalists wished him to remain their King.) After this come several pages of worldly argument, shrewd and to the point. But presently he returns to sacred themes. The Liberals, revolutionaries, and Carbonari of the whole world, he says, are part of one general conspiracy, aimed not so much against governments as against the Religion of the Saviour. 'Their motto is to crush the Inf— [Voltaire's motto, *Ecrasez l'infame*]. I do not dare even to write this horrible blasphemy, only too well known through the writings of Voltaire, Mirabeau, Condorcet, and so many others of the like sort.' His beliefs, he says, are in agreement with St Paul:

At this moment, I have opened the Scriptures to look for the passage bearing on what I have just been saying to you, and, in opening the book, my eyes fell on the Epistle to the Romans, Chap. VIII. from v. 22 to the end of the Chapter. This is not the quotation that I was looking for, but as what opened appeared so striking and analogous to what I was writing to you, I urge you to read it.

The quotation on which I rest what I said to you about *faith* is in the Epistle to the Romans, Chap. XIV, in the last verse 23: 'He is damned because he doeth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.'¹

I feel that I am the depository of a sacred and holy work; I neither must nor can compromise it; I must even less be a cause of scandal.

St Paul says, Epistle to the Romans, Chap. XIV:

V. 13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

V. 16: Let not then your good be evil spoken of.

V. 18: For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

V. 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

V. 21: It is good not to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

¹ Where I have departed from the Authorized Version, I have done so in order to conform to the Emperor's text.

V. 22: Hast thou a clear faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he whose conscience condemneth him not in that which he doth.

V. 23: For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

From these texts it apparently followed that it was right to imprison the best people in Naples, and restore a cruel tyrant to absolute rule. Alexander commanded the largest army in the world, and had power to make his will prevail. Metternich, it is true, thought him mad, but regarded that as a matter of no consequence, so long as the madman could be made to carry out the wishes of the Austrian Foreign Office.

Alexander's religion went through many phases. At first, while orthodox, he did not trouble himself much about it. Then, partly under his sister Catherine's influence, he became interested in the Free Masons, whom the more orthodox regarded with aversion. Madame Krüdener, following the advice of the Moravian cobbler, laid stress on the Bible, and led Alexander to study the Scriptures. He encouraged the British and Foreign Bible Society to distribute Bibles in Russia, and Prince Golitzin was associated with him in this work. Koshelev, a friend of Golitzin was another of Alexander's religious coadjutors. These two men endeavoured to prevent him from becoming wholly reactionary, and were, in their religious views, not in agreement with the fanatical orthodoxy of the Russian Church dignitaries. One of the most prominent of the latter was the Archimandrite Photius, who, after the death of Koshelev, acquired considerable influence over the Emperor. When Koshelev died, Photius pronounced a somewhat singular funeral prayer:

In the depth of silence and solitude, I pray the Lord to employ in His works, when He shall judge it suitable, the man of God, to destroy the Satanic vaults, hidden in mysterious resorts, secret societies of Voltaireans, freemasons and martinists, and to decapitate the seven-headed hydra, that thrice cursed illuminism, of which the High Priest or magus, quite recently, on St George's Day, the 26th of November, was summoned to appear before the tribunal of the Lord.

In international affairs, Alexander's policy had still one step to take; this was taken in 1822, at the Congress of Verona and in the preliminary conversations at Vienna. The revolt of the

Greeks against Turkish tyranny was gathering force, and was rousing passionate enthusiasm, not only among liberals, but also among those who retained the outlook of the Crusades, and disliked the subjection of Christians to Mohammedans. In Russia there was, in addition, a nationalistic motive for sympathy with Greece, since Turkey was the hereditary national enemy, and Russia had territorial ambitions which could only be satisfied at the expense of the Turks. To Austria the matter presented itself in a different light: the break-up of Turkey was likely to strengthen Russia unduly. Metternich succeeded in persuading Alexander not to take up the cause of the Greeks, on the ground that they were rebels against lawful authority. Metternich was well aware that Alexander was sacrificing important Russian interests; he wrote to the Emperor Francis: 'The Russian Cabinet has ruined with one blow the great work of Peter the Great and of his successors.' From that time onward, the Concert of Europe took cognizance of Russia's dealings with the Porte, which had not previously been the case. Metternich congratulated himself on his achievement; 'the *tour de force* that I have accomplished is an uncommon one,' he notes complacently.

To Alexander, it seemed that he was merely carrying out the principles of the Holy Alliance. Chateaubriand, who was one of the French plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Verona, relates what the Tsar said to him on this subject:

There can no longer be English, French, Russian, Prussian, Austrian policies; there is no longer anything but one general policy, which must, for the good of all, be adopted in common by the peoples and by the kings. It is for me to show myself convinced by the principles upon which I based the Alliance. An occasion presented itself: the revolt of Greece. No doubt nothing appeared more in my interests, in those of my peoples, in accordance with the opinion of my country, than a religious war with Turkey; but I thought I observed the revolutionary mark in the troubles of the Peloponnesus. Consequently, I abstained. . . . No, I will never separate myself from the monarchs with whom I am united; it must be permitted to kings to have public alliances to defend themselves against secret societies. What could tempt me? What need have I to increase my Empire? Providence has not placed eight hundred thousand soldiers under my orders to satisfy my ambition, but to protect

religion, morality, and justice, and to cause to reign the principles of order upon which human society rests.

By these reflections the Imperial introvert preserved his virtue while the Greeks continued to be impaled.

In home affairs, during his last years, Alexander was no better than in the affairs of Europe. He made the censorship very strict, curtailed education, severely limited academic freedom, and devoted most of his attention to the 'military colonies,' which were attempts to subject peasants to army discipline without taking them away from their labour as serfs. His minister Arakcheev was his dark angel, playing upon his remorse, encouraging him in despair leading to cruelty. Arakcheev had been a faithful servant of the Emperor Paul, and did not fail to remind Alexander of this fact. In 1823, on the anniversary of Paul's birthday, Arakcheev wrote to Alexander: 'After having expressed in the Divine temple my sentiments of profound gratitude for the memory of him whose name we celebrate today, and who, from the place which he occupies near the throne of God, certainly sees the sincere affection and devotion which are felt for his August Successor by that one among his subjects whom it pleased him, while he still lived, to place near his son, ordering him to be to him a faithful servant, I execute this order with entire sincerity and I thank God every day for the favour that Your Majesty shows me.'

The Emperor owed gratitude to Arakcheev for protection from the furies of Paul, which were often dangerous even to his own family. Alexander left many things in home affairs to Arakcheev; others he pretended to leave to him while in fact regulating them himself. For example, there exists in the Emperor's handwriting the draft of a letter from Arakcheev to an official who wished to retire, stating that he (Arakcheev) had thought it best not to submit this demand to the Emperor, and professing to refuse the demand without the Emperor's knowledge.

It is a debated question how far Arakcheev was cruel on his own account, and how far he was merely a screen for Alexander; but I do not think it can be doubted that he nourished Alexander's remorse, which, in the end, made him sick of life, and incapable of staying long in any one place. To his darkened mind, standing on the edge of madness, grim bigots such as the Archimandrite Photius became congenial. Since 1815, he had eschewed gaiety and love; his sister Catherine was dead. Bit by

bit, the real world became obscured by the mists of his own troubles, until, oppressed by gloom, he died.

Alexander's character, apart from the touch of Romanov madness, was compounded of vanity and peasant shrewdness. His shrewdness failed in the end, but was remarkable in his heyday. From Erfurt, where he was pretending friendship with Napoleon, he writes to his mother to say 'we shall see his fall with serenity, if such is the will of Providence,' and to give sound reasons for expecting his fall, while explaining that meanwhile his friendship is preferable to his enmity. His vanity demanded every one's approval. Gentz, reporting on the Congress of Vienna, says: 'The Emperor of Russia has come to Vienna, in the first place to be admired, which is always the principal thing in his thoughts.' One can see the Emperor, in his early days, as a handsome young peasant, alternately dancing at village festivals so as to win the hearts of maidens, and swindling his neighbours over the sale of cows. A considerable part of his religion might be described as vanity towards God, Who, he feared, disapproved of the way he had acquired the throne. In exercising tyranny, he felt that he was pleasing God, Whom he evidently imagined as resembling his father.

Such was the author of the Holy Alliance, who for a period of ten years caused the international affairs of Europe to be regulated in accordance with his conception of the Christian religion. It was an interesting experiment, but the results were perhaps not entirely satisfactory.

The Twilight of Metternich

At the time of the Congress of Verona, in 1822, Metternich's power was at its height. Various fortunate circumstances had helped him. First and foremost, the firm support of the Emperor Francis, who was, if anything, even more reactionary than his minister, and objected to education on the ground that 'obedient subjects are more desirable than enlightened citizens.' A second support of Metternich's power was his success in securing the supremacy of Austria and Austrian principles in Germany. Some of the German Princes were inclined to grant constitutions, as almost all had promised to do in 1813. The universities were full of liberalism, aiming not only at democracy, but at German unity. 'Some men,' says Metternich in a report to the Emperor Francis (and it is noticeable that they are nearly all persons engaged in teaching), ' . . . direct their eyes to the union of all Germans in one Germany. . . . The systematic preparation of youth for this infamous object has lasted already more than one of these [student] generations. A whole class of future State officials, professors, and incipient literary men, is here ripened for revolution.' In dealing with this situation, he had a stroke of luck. In March 1819, just before the Conference of Carlsbad, which had been summoned to deal with such matters, a reactionary writer, Kotzebue, a Pole much admired by the Emperor Alexander, was murdered by a theological student named Karl Sand. Many of those whom Metternich regarded as his enemies considered this murder meritorious, and made a hero of the assassin. In these circumstances it was not difficult to persuade both Alexander and the German Princes that liberalism was dangerous. Decrees were passed at Carlsbad imposing more severe restrictions on the Press and the professors; and Kotzebue's death did as much as the mutiny in the Semionovsky regiment to win for Metternich the support of Russia. The policy of France, throughout this period, was growing steadily more reactionary. Finally Castlereagh, who had learnt to co-operate with Austria

at the Congress of Vienna, continued the same policy in subsequent years except where British interests made it impossible. On hearing of his death in 1822, Metternich wrote that he 'was the only man in his country who had gained any experience in foreign affairs; he had learned to understand me.' This was high praise indeed!

Throughout the years from 1814 to 1822, Metternich's power was continually on the increase, until it came to seem as if his will were omnipotent throughout Europe. It is no wonder if he came to have a good opinion of himself. Shortly before the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1818, he writes to his wife:

I am more and more convinced that affairs of importance can only be properly conducted by oneself. . . . I have become a species of moral power in Germany, perhaps even in Europe—a power which will leave a void when it disappears: and nevertheless it will disappear, like all belonging to poor frail human nature. I hope Heaven will yet give me time to do some good; that is my dearest wish.

A year later, finding himself in the same room in which he signed the Quadruple Alliance in 1813, solemn reflections concerning his importance to the world are forced upon him:

My mind conceives nothing narrow or limited; I always go, on every side, far beyond all that occupies the greater number of men of business; I cover ground infinitely larger than they can see or wish to see. I cannot help saying to myself twenty times a day: 'Good God, how right I am, and how wrong they are! And how easy this reason is to see—it is so clear, so simple, and so natural.' I shall repeat this till my last breath, and the world will go on in its own miserable way none the less.

After 1822, however, he was no longer omnipotent. Canning, who succeeded Castlereagh, opposed Austrian policy, not only in details, but in broad outlines. In 1823, Metternich writes sadly about England:

What a pity it is that the Queen of the Sea and the sometime ruler of the world should lose her salutary influence. What has become of the great and noble British Empire? What has become of its men and its orators, its feeling for right and duty, and its

ideas of justice? This is not the work of a single individual, of one weak and feeble man; Canning is but the personification of the symptoms of the terrible malady which runs through every vein of the fatherland—a malady which has destroyed its strength and threatens the weakened body with dissolution.

Why this lamentation? Chiefly because England would not help Spain to reconquer Spanish America, or Turkey to reconquer Greece. On this latter question, there was worse to follow.

If the death of Castlereagh was a misfortune for Metternich, the death of Alexander was perhaps even more of a disaster to his policy. He was proud of his achievement in persuading Alexander that, as regards Greece, the principle of legitimacy must be put above Russian interests. But after Alexander's death in 1825, his brother Nicholas reverted to the natural Russian policy of hostility to the Porte. In 1827, England, France, and Russia, combined, destroyed the Turkish fleet at the battle of Navarino, after which the recognition of Greek independence by all the Powers could not be long delayed.

The collapse of the system of international government inaugurated at the Congress of Vienna was made still more complete by the Revolution of 1830. France got rid of Charles X and substituted Louis Philippe, who had no legitimate claim to the throne; Belgium refused to remain united with Holland, and had to be recognized as a separate kingdom; there were revolutionary movements in Italy and Germany; and Russian Poland rebelled against the Tsar. Except in France and Belgium, however, no success attended these movements; even in France, it was soon found that the new King was not so very different from the legitimate Bourbons.

In the end, while Metternich's system never again controlled Europe, his personal position was improved by the events of 1830. The Tsar Nicholas, who loved Charles X, and was alarmed by the Polish insurrection, decided that the reactionary Powers must stand by each other, and that it was unsafe to quarrel with Austria. The movements of revolt in Germany, though rather mild, became a source of strength to the reaction after they had been suppressed. Within Austria, while a party of reform existed, Metternich, now grown very deaf, was able to ignore its programme, and did in fact remain largely unaware of it.

What, in the end, defeated him was the growing force of

nationalism. 'By the help of God,' he wrote in 1819, 'I hope to defeat the German Revolution just as I vanquished the conqueror of the world.' This hope proved delusive, in spite of his most earnest efforts to realize it. The censorship did what it could to prevent even the most indirect encouragement of national feeling. 'A band of youthful heroes who flocked around the glorious standard of their country' was altered by the Censor to 'a considerable number of young men who voluntarily enlisted themselves for the public service.'¹ Metternich forbade Austrian students to study in foreign universities, objected to young men learning history or philosophy or politics, and preferred that Austrian writers should publish their books abroad rather than in their own country. In 1834 he harangued a Conference of German Ministers on the evils of Liberalism, speaking of 'the misguided attempts of factions to supersede the monarchical principle by the modern idea of the sovereignty of the people,' and of the Liberal party as one that 'corrupts the youth, deludes even those of riper years, introduces trouble and discord into all the public and private relations of life, deliberately incites the population to cherish a systematic distrust of their rulers, and preaches the destruction and annihilation of all that exists.' The assembled Ministers applauded; nevertheless 'the distrust of rulers' continued to increase.

In the last years of Metternich's power, there was trouble in Italy, trouble in Bohemia, trouble in Galicia, and trouble in Hungary—in each case from the awakening sense of nationality. The most serious of these was the trouble in Hungary. Hungary had a constitution which had come down from the middle ages, which gave power to the aristocracy in local affairs, though not in the central government. In theory there was a Diet which was supposed to be summoned on great occasions, but in practice it was becoming obsolete when Hungarian nationalism revived it. In 1825, it demanded the substitution of the Magyar language for Latin, in which its debates were traditionally conducted; and after a long struggle it obtained, in 1827, a promise that it should be summoned every three years. From this time onwards, the Government made a series of concessions to the Magyars, resisting only sufficiently to encourage nationalist feeling. The patriot Kossuth was arrested, but was released when the Diet, in 1839, refused to grant either money or soldiers until he was set free. A feeble effort at repression in the years 1844 to 1847 stimulated

¹ Sandeman, *Metternich*, p. 263.

national feeling, and led, in 1847, to the election of a Diet in which the majority was passionately anti-governmental. This was the situation in Hungary on the eve of the Revolution of 1848.

The other non-German portions of the Hapsburg Empire had no constitutional means of expressing their discontent, but they employed such means as they possessed. National feeling revived in Bohemia, and among the South Slavs; the Galician Poles prepared to rebel. Everywhere the situation was threatening, but Metternich's long tenure of power had made him fatuous.

The French Revolution of 1848 gave occasion for the discontents of the whole of the Continent to break loose. Revolts had already begun in Italy even before Louis Philippe had to fly from Paris, but after this event they spread to the whole peninsula, with the exception of the dominions of the King of Sardinia, who was himself a somewhat timid liberal. Throughout Germany the democrats rose; in Hungary Kossuth proclaimed freedom; in Galicia, the Polish aristocrats raised a nationalist revolt, and were quelled only by means of a jacquerie encouraged, or at least tolerated, by the Austrian government. For a moment, the champions of legitimacy were routed everywhere except in the dominions of the Tsar.

In German Austria, meanwhile, the Liberals were demanding a constitution, but were demanding still more earnestly the fall of Metternich. The streets of Vienna were in an uproar, and Metternich, to his amazement, found himself opposed, not only by the rabble, not only by the doctrinaire Liberals, but by many hitherto conservative aristocrats and by a powerful faction at Court. He agreed to all the demands of the revolutionaries except his own retirement, but this concession did nothing to quiet them. At last, intimidated by the mob, the Imperial family, who had been divided in their opinions, all agreed that Metternich must go. With some difficulty, he made his escape, taking refuge in England, where he handed on the torch to Disraeli.

Metternich was not a great man; his talents did not entitle him to the place that he occupied on the European stage. He had agreeable manners and a persuasive tongue; he was pleasing to women; he was adroit in taking advantage of the personal idiosyncrasies of those with whom he had to negotiate. His principles were those of his Emperor, and circumstances gave Austria a commanding position after the fall of Napoleon. France had been crushed by defeat; England was determined to preserve peace at all costs; Alexander was willing to sacrifice Russia

to religion; the King of Prussia was feeble and vacillating. To these factors is to be added Austria's peculiar interest in the legitimist anti-nationalist principles which inspired all the Great Powers while fear of the Revolution and Napoleon still dominated their political thought. But as the years went by the Powers, one by one, abandoned Metternich's creed: England in 1822, Russia in 1825, France in 1830, while his hold on Germany gradually weakened. His passion was for immobility—not unnaturally, in view of the many years during which revolutionary France had kept the world in turmoil. In 1815 there were many to sympathize with immobility as the basis of statecraft, but the long peace generated new energy, and new energy made immobility intolerable. In this new mood, the world saw Metternich as he was: pompous, vain, vapid, incapable of stating his own principles interestingly, and closed to all new ideas from the moment of Napoleon's disappearance. In his immediate *entourage* the eighteenth century survived as in a museum, and he refused to believe that the rest of the world had adopted new ways of living and thinking. Gradually his admiring audience, which had embraced all the leading men of Europe, grew less, but he continued to act the same part. Before he was hissed off the stage, his style had long been antiquated. Deaf and garrulous, nothing remained for him but an old age of reminiscent monologue. In that rôle, at last, he had become harmless.

PART II

THE MARCH OF MIND

'God bless my soul, sir!' exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott bursting, one fine May morning, into the breakfast-room at Crotchet Castle, 'I am out of all patience with this march of mind. Here has my house been nearly burned down, by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics, in a sixpenny tract, published by the Steam Intellect Society, and written by a learned friend who is for doing all the world's business as well as his own, and is equally well qualified to handle every branch of human knowledge.'

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

SECTION A

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

ENGLAND in the first part of the nineteenth century has a special importance in history, owing to the development of industrialism, at that time virtually non-existent elsewhere. Industrialism generated certain habits of thought, and certain systems of political economy, in which features peculiar to the England of that time were inextricably interwoven with the essentials of the new method of production. The modern outlook had to force its way, with difficulty, against older ways of thinking and acting. It was only in a small part of England that modern factories and mines existed; they had almost no effect upon the minds of most men of education, including almost all the possessors of political power. To understand the new ideas of that time it is, therefore, necessary to take account of the social *milieu* in which they grew up, and of the ignorance concerning industrial problems which the governing classes had derived from a classical education and a pre-occupation with sport.

At the end of the Napoleonic wars, the English were sharply divided into different classes and different kinds of occupation. Industrial life, both that of employers and that of wage-earners, was practically unknown to the rest of the community. In the

country there were the three classes of landlords, farmers, and labourers. The smaller landlords were country gentry; the larger landlords formed the aristocracy. Political power, ever since the Revolution of 1688, had been almost wholly concentrated in the aristocracy, which, by means of the system of rotten boroughs, controlled the House of Commons as well as the House of Lords. Since about 1760, the aristocracy, by a shameless use of the power of Parliament, had considerably lowered the standard of life among wage-earners. It had also impeded the progress of the middle-class manufacturers, partly from ignorance, partly from jealousy of new power, partly from a desire for high rents. But most of this had been done in a semi-conscious, almost somnambulistic fashion, for the legislators of those days did not take their duties very seriously. With the beginning of our period, however, a new strenuousness comes into vogue, and the easy-going eighteenth-century spirit gradually gives way to the earnestness and virtue of the Victorians.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Aristocracy

THE Whigs and Tories, the two parties into which the aristocracy was divided, had originally been composed, respectively, of the enemies and the friends of the Stuarts, with the result that, after the fall of James II, the Whigs held almost uninterrupted power for nearly a century. But the Tories crept back into office under the aegis of George III, consolidated their rule by opposition to the French Revolution, and kept the Whigs in opposition until 1830. The division between Whigs and Tories was social as well as political: there were Whig houses where one met Whigs, and Tory houses where one met Tories. As a rule, Whigs married Whigs, and Tories married Tories. While both were equally aristocratic, they differed considerably in their traditions and in their attitude to the rising middle class.

In the early nineteenth century, the Tories were, on the whole, less intelligent than the Whigs. Their leading principle, opposition to France and to all French ideas, was one which neither demanded nor stimulated intellectual thought. They felt that all had been well before the Jacobins put their poison into men's minds, and that, now that Napoleon was safely interred in Saint Helena, the only thing necessary was to suppress at once every tendency to a recrudescence of revolutionary nonsense whether at home or abroad. They were loyal to Church and King, though they found George IV something of a strain. They believed in the divinely appointed hierarchy of social grades, and in the importance of respect from inferiors to superiors. They were friends to the agricultural interest, and anxious to keep England self-supporting in the matter of food. They were, of course, opposed to popular education, freedom of the Press, and seditious oratory. For the rest, they drank their port from loyalty to our ancient ally Portugal, and accepted the consequent gout as a price paid for the performance of patriotic duty. Their politicians, since the death of Pitt, were men of mediocre ability. Their one great man was the Duke of Wellington, and he had

been more successful in war than he subsequently proved in statesmanship. Tom Moore in 1827 expressed the general view of Wellington in the lines:

Great Captain who takes such pains
To prove—what is granted—*nem. con.*
With how moderate a portion of brains
Some heroes contrive to get on.

There was, it is true, one man of great political ability in the Tory Party, namely Canning. But he was unpopular among the Tories; on one occasion when Canning went out of office a Tory gentleman was heard thanking God that 'they would have no more of these confounded men of genius.'

The Whigs were more interesting and more complex. Owing their position to successful revolution against a King, they never adopted the unquestioning loyalty of the Tories. Having imported the Hanoverians, they felt towards them, in some degree, as towards hired servants, who could be dismissed if they proved unsatisfactory. Lord John Russell, being asked by Queen Victoria if it was true that he held resistance to sovereigns justifiable in some circumstances, replied: 'Madam, speaking to a sovereign of the House of Hanover, I think I may say that I do.' At the time of the French Revolution, while most of the Whigs followed Burke in condemnation, Fox, who remained the official leader of the party, was as pro-French as was possible in view of the Reign of Terror. Throughout the long years from 1793 to 1815, when all friendship to French ideas was regarded as criminal, and men suspected of Jacobin tendencies were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, some of the most prominent Whigs continued freely to express opinions which would have landed humbler folk in gaol, such as belief in liberty and advocacy of drastic parliamentary reform. They supported the war against Napoleon, whom they regarded as a tyrant. But they were never as enthusiastic for the war as the Tories were, and when Napoleon returned from Elba in 1815 many of them thought that he ought to be given another chance. Even after Waterloo, Lord John Russell expressed regret in the House of Commons that this policy had not been adopted.

The Whigs believed in monarchy, as a useful element in the defence of order; but they never pretended to have any respect for royal personages. Greville in 1829 remarks:

'There have been good and wise kings, but not many of them. Take them one with another, they are of an inferior character, and this [George IV] I believe to be one of the worst of the kind.'

Writing of the building of Buckingham Palace in the reign of William IV, Creevey says:

'Never was there such a specimen of wicked, vulgar profusion. It has cost a million of money, and there is not a fault that has not been committed in it. Raspberry-coloured pillars without end, that quite turn you sick to look at; but the Queen's paper for her own apartments far exceed [*sic*] everything else in their ugliness and vulgarity. . . . Can one be surprised at people becoming Radical with such specimens of royal prodigality before their eyes? to say nothing of the characters of such royalties themselves.'¹

The sufferings of the aristocracy were, unlike those of royalty, a matter for sympathy. When William IV comes to the throne, Creevey (who calls him 'Billy') makes fun of him for having bad eyesight. But when he finds Lord Holland (who was Fox's nephew) hard up, he regards it as a grave matter:

'I was at Lord Holland's yesterday. . . . They both looked very ill. They are evidently most sorely pinched—he in his land, and she still more in her sugar and rum.² So when I gave it as my opinion that, if things went on as they did, *paper* must ooze out again by connivance or otherwise [England had not long before returned to the gold standard], she said she wished to God the time was come, or anything else to save them. He said that he never would consent to the return of *paper*, but he thought the standard might be altered: *i.e.* a sovereign to be made by law worth one or two or three and twenty shillings.'

Lord and Lady Holland were the social centre of Whig society. If a man had brains and the right principles, he did not need to be an aristocrat in order to be admitted to their dinners. Sydney Smith and (later) Macaulay were frequent visitors. Greville (February 6, 1832) describes his first meeting with Macaulay at Holland House:

February 6th.—Dined yesterday with Lord Holland; came very late, and found a vacant place between Sir George Robinson

¹ *Creevey Papers*, 1903, II, pp. 307-8.

² Lady Holland was the daughter and heiress of a Jamaica planter.

and a common-looking man in black. As soon as I had time to look at my neighbour, I began to speculate (as one usually does) as to who he might be, and as he did not for some time open his lips except to eat, I settled that he was some obscure man of letters or of medicine, perhaps a cholera doctor. In a short time the conversation turned upon early and late education, and Lord Holland said he had always remarked that self-educated men were peculiarly conceited and arrogant, and apt to look down upon the generality of mankind, from their being ignorant of how much other people knew; not having been at public schools, they are uninformed of the course of general education. My neighbour observed that he thought the most remarkable example of self-education was that of Alfieri, who had reached the age of thirty without having acquired any accomplishment save that of driving, and who was so ignorant of his own language that he had to learn it like a child, beginning with elementary books. Lord Holland quoted Julius Caesar Scaliger as an example of late education, saying that he had been married and commenced learning Greek the same day, when my neighbour remarked 'that he supposed his learning Greek was not an instantaneous act like his marriage.' This remark, and the manner of it, gave me the notion that he was a dull fellow, for it came out in a way which bordered on the ridiculous, so as to excite something like a sneer. I was a little surprised to hear him continue the thread of conversation (from Scaliger's wound) and talk of Loyola having been wounded at Pampeluna. I wondered how he happened to know anything about Loyola's wound. Having thus settled my opinion, I went on eating my dinner, when Auckland, who was sitting opposite to me, addressed my neighbour, 'Mr. Macaulay, will you drink a glass of wine?' I thought I should have dropped off my chair. It was MACAULAY, the man I had been so long most curious to see and to hear, whose genius, eloquence, astonishing knowledge, and diversified talents have excited my wonder and admiration for such a length of time, and here I had been sitting next to him, hearing him talk, and setting him down for a dull fellow. I felt as if he could have read my thoughts, and the perspiration burst from every pore of my face, and yet it was impossible not to be amused at the idea. It was not till Macaulay stood up that I was aware of all the vulgarity and ungainliness of his appearance; not a ray of intellect beams from his countenance; a lump of more ordinary clay never enclosed a powerful mind and lively

imagination. He had a cold and sore throat, the latter of which occasioned a constant contraction of the muscles of the thorax, making him appear as if in momentary danger of a fit. His manner struck me as not pleasing, but it was not assuming, unembarrassed, yet not easy, unpolished, yet not coarse; there was no kind of usurpation of the conversation, no tenacity as to opinion or facts, no assumption of superiority, but the variety and extent of his information were soon apparent, for whatever subject was touched upon he evinced the utmost familiarity with it; quotation, illustration, anecdote, seemed ready in his hands for every topic. Primogeniture in this country, in others, and particularly in ancient Rome, was the principal topic, I think, but Macaulay was not certain what was the law of Rome, except that when a man died intestate his estate was divided between his children. After dinner Talleyrand and Madame de Dino came in. Macaulay was introduced to Talleyrand, who told him that he meant to go to the House of Commons on Tuesday, and that he hopes he would speak, 'qu'il avait entendu tous les grands orateurs, et il desirait à présent entendre Monsieur Macaulay.'

Melbourne was a frequent visitor at Holland House, and his conversation, as reported by Greville, is incredibly cultivated. Take this as a sample, on September 7, 1834: 'Allen spoke of the early reformers, the Catharists, and how the early Christians persecuted each other; Melbourne quoted Vigilanius's letter to Jerome, and then asked Allen about the 11th of Henry IV, an Act passed by the Commons against the Church, and referred to the dialogue between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely at the beginning of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which Lord Holland sent for and read, Melbourne knowing it all by heart and prompting all the time.'

Creevey, who had tendencies to Radicalism, sometimes turned against the Hollands. On one occasion, during a quarrel about Fox's epitaph, he wrote: 'As for the wretched dirt and mean-ness of Holland House, it makes me perfectly sick' (July 24, 1820). But on another occasion his impression was quite different: 'never was so much struck with the agreeableness of Lord Holland. I don't suppose there is any Englishman living who covers so much ground as he does—biographical, historical, and anecdotal' (November 23, 1833). Intermediate in sentiment is a third entry: 'I dined with Madagascar [nickname for Lady

Holland] at Holland House, a small party, and for once, to my delight, plenty of elbow-room. . . . Whilst Holland House *can* be as agreeable a house as any I know, it is quite as much at other times distinguished for *twaddle*, and so it was on this occasion' (April 23, 1836). The overcrowding at Holland House dinner parties was notorious. My grandmother used to tell how, on one occasion when she was present, an unexpected guest had arrived, and Lady Holland had called the length of the table 'Make room, my dear,' to which Lord Holland replied 'I shall have to make it, for it does not exist.'

Lady Holland displayed on occasion all the insolence of a great lady. Creevey (July 6, 1833) gives the following instance:

I met Lady Holland again on Thursday at Lord Sefton's. She began by complaining of the slipperiness of the courtyard, and of the danger of her horses falling; to which Sefton replied that it should be gravelled the next time she did him the honour of dining there. She then began to sniff, and, turning her eyes to various pots filled with beautiful roses and all kinds of flowers, she said: 'Lord Sefton, I must beg you to have those flowers taken out of the room, they are so much too powerful for me.'—Sefton and his valet Paoli actually carried the table and all its contents out of the room. Then poor dear little Ly. Sefton, who has always a posy as large as life at her breast when she is dressed, took it out in the humblest manner, and said:—'Perhaps, Lady Holland, this nosegay may be too much for you.'—But the other was pleased to allow her to keep it, tho' by no means in a very gracious manner. Then when candles were lighted at the close of dinner, she would have three of them put out, as being too much and too near her. Was there ever?

When she died, Greville took the opportunity to sum up the importance of Holland House (November 24, 1845):

Though she was a woman for whom nobody felt any affection, and whose death therefore will have excited no grief, she will be regretted by a great many people, some from kindly, more from selfish motives, and all who had been accustomed to live at Holland House and continued to be her *habitués* will lament over the fall of the curtain on that long drama, and the final extinction of a social light which illuminated and adorned England and even Europe for half a century. The world never

has seen and never will again see anything like Holland House, and though it was by no means the same thing as it was during Lord Holland's life, Lady Holland contrived to assemble round her to the last a great society, comprising almost everybody that was conspicuous, remarkable, and agreeable.

It must not be supposed that all Whig society was as intellectual as the Holland House dinner parties. But on the whole the leading Whigs were people of considerable culture, which they took lightly, and combined with an eighteenth-century freedom of morals. Lady Holland had left a previous husband for Lord Holland, and they had lived together for some time before she was divorced. Melbourne's wife, as all the world knew, had been madly in love with Byron, and had pursued him even more than he liked. Lady Oxford also loved Byron, and *her* affection was reciprocated. Sir Francis Burdett was another of Lady Oxford's lovers, and her children were known as the Oxford Miscellany.

Whig society was tolerant of Radical aberrations, provided they were accompanied by wit, learning, or a combination of birth and fortune. Byron at first fitted in quite easily. When he made his one and only speech in the Lords, in defence of the Luddite rioters who were being punished with extreme ferocity, no one thought the worse of him, partly, of course, because it was known that his speech could have no influence. But in the end he went too far, not in political ways, but in matters of private morals. It was not so much his sins that were condemned as his habit of flaunting them. At last he was dropped even by old Lady Melbourne, the statesman's mother, who had been his confidant, and had, in her day, carried eighteenth-century freedom to the extreme limit permitted by good manners.

Polite scepticism was common among the Whigs. But their middle-class supporters were mostly earnest nonconformists, and therefore infidel opinions were only to be avowed in conversation: to state them in a form accessible to the lower orders was vulgar. For this reason, Shelley, whose talents would otherwise have made him eligible, was an outcast from the first. For an undergraduate to try to convert the Master of his College to atheism, while it may not have been wicked, was certainly bad form. Moreover, he had abandoned his wife, and what was worse, he had run away with the daughter of that old

reprobate Godwin, a Jacobin who had only escaped the just penalty of his crimes by publishing his book at a prohibitive price. And not only was the young lady's father a hoary revolutionary, but her mother had advocated the rights of women, and had lived an openly immoral life in Paris, not for fun merely, but in obedience to a theory. This was beyond a joke. The Whigs remembered that even liberal aristocrats had had their heads cut off by Robespierre. They always knew where to draw the line, and they drew it, emphatically, at Shelley. The prejudice persisted down to my own day, and, I am told, still persists in certain circles. When, at the age of sixteen, I became interested in Shelley, I was informed that Byron could be forgiven because, though he had sinned, he had been led into sin by the unfortunate circumstances of his youth, and had always been haunted by remorse, but that for Shelley's moral character there was nothing to be said, since he acted on principle, and therefore he could not be worth reading.

Country Life

THROUGHOUT the Napoleonic wars, and for some time afterwards, the life of the country gentry was quiet and prosperous. Wars were not, in those days, so disturbing as they have since become, and few squires bothered their heads about public affairs. The value of land was increasing, and rents were going up: the demand for agricultural produce grew as the population grew, and Great Britain still provided for almost the whole of its own consumption of food. In Jane Austen's novels, which deal with the lives of small rural landowners, there is, so far as I remember, only one allusion to the war: the hero of *Persuasion* has been a naval officer, and there is some prize money due to him, which is expected to facilitate his marriage. Of his valiant feats of arms we hear not a word, and apparently they would not have increased his attractiveness to the heroine. Newspapers are rarely mentioned, and only once, I think, in connection with politics. Generally they are introduced to throw sidelights on her characters. Mr Darcy picked up a newspaper to conceal his embarrassment when he called to propose to Elizabeth Bennett. Mr Palmer, when he had been reluctantly persuaded by his wife to pay a call, as soon as he had said how-do-you-do, picked up a newspaper. 'Is there anything in the newspaper?' asked Mrs Palmer. 'Nothing whatever,' said Mr Palmer, and went on reading. Perhaps the newspaper contained an account of the mutiny at the Nore or the extinction of the Venetian Republic. If so, Mr Palmer did not think such events worth mentioning.

There have been periods when religion disturbed men's minds. Indeed, at the very time when Jane Austen was writing, Methodism was producing a profound transformation of the middle and lower classes. But in her novels religion appears only under one aspect: as providing parsonages for younger sons. All the richer characters in her books have livings in their gift; sometimes they bestow them upon absurdities, sometimes

upon the virtuous hero, but in either case it is the economic aspect that interests her.

The larger farmers were, in their way, as comfortable as the landowners, though they grumbled about the tithe and the poor-rate. They aped the manners of 'gentlefolk,' hunted and drank and gambled. The traditional figure of John Bull is derived from this period; it is curious that he should have been accepted, down to the present day, as the type of an overwhelmingly urban nation.

There was a dreadful moment, in 1815, when the country gentry and the farmers feared that their peasant manner of life was to be brought to an abrupt end. The war was over, and it was possible to import grain from abroad. The harvest at home was bad, and foreigners were offering wheat at a price with which British produce could not compete. There was acute distress in the industrial regions, because foreign nations were erecting tariffs against British manufactures. But Parliament listened to the complaints of landowners and farmers, and imposed a heavy duty on foreign grain. As a result, the richer classes in the country remained rich—at what cost to the rest of the nation we shall see.

The life of the rural wage-earners in England in the early nineteenth century presented such an extreme contrast to the prosperity of the gentry that it is difficult to understand the bland complacency of the upper classes. The Continental peasantry, except in France, and in some parts of Germany, were wretched enough, but their misery was of long standing and was, on the whole, in process of amelioration. But in England from 1760 onwards there had been a steady deterioration in the condition of the rural poor, though the change was silent and almost unnoticed. The landless class, which hardly existed on the Continent, was greatly augmented, and supplied the human material essential to the rapid rise of British industrialism. Most historians did not adequately realize the miseries which resulted from the altered position of the rural wage-earner until the publication, in 1911, of *The Village Labourer*, by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, a massive and horrifying indictment of upper-class greed.

The instruments of spoliation of the poor by the rich were various; the two most important were enclosures and the Poor Law.

The history of enclosures, apart from its intrinsic interest, is

important as showing the influence of politics on economic progress. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the rural poor enjoyed a state of tolerable comfort. At that time probably half of the cultivated land in England was worked on the old strip system, and divided up into holdings of all sizes, from very large to very small. Most labourers on farms rented strips of land and cottages which carried with them rights of grazing and firewood on the commons. In many cases these common rights existed, or were taken for granted, independently of the holding of a cottage. Thus the labourer got his firewood free, could keep fowls, a cow, or a pig on the common, and, if he were thrifty, could save his wages and lay strip to strip until he became a well-to-do farmer.

But throughout the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, first the open fields and then the waste lands were, at an increasing speed, enclosed and redistributed by Acts of Parliament. A few, or sometimes only one, of the local landowners would petition for such an Act, a Bill would be introduced and a Committee appointed. When the Bill had been passed the land could be redistributed at the discretion of the appointed Commissioners. The lion's share went to the principal landowner, who was often either a peer or a Member of Parliament: there was a system of log-rolling by which a great man could safely leave his interests in the hands of his friends. The larger farmers would secure a substantial share, but the smaller farmers and cottagers, as a rule, obtained nothing, or, if they were given their share, were unable to take it because of the expense of the necessary fencing. 'The small farmer either emigrated to America or to an industrial town, or became a day labourer.' The cottager was often reduced to a state of starvation. This was considered highly satisfactory by the landlords, who regretted the demoralizing effects on the labourer of the partial independence which his ancestors had enjoyed for centuries, considering that it made him lazy, and that, until he became completely dependent on his employer, he could not be relied upon to give all his energy to his employer's interests. Enclosures deprived the labourers, not only of land and valuable rights, but also of bargaining power in their dealings with farmers and landlords: they were therefore doubly impoverished, first, by the loss of sources of livelihood outside their wages, and second, by a fall of wages. The total amount of agricultural produce was increased, but the labourers had to put up with not merely a

smaller proportion, but an absolute diminution in their earnings. The degradation of the peasantry which ensued was a heavy price to pay for more scientific agriculture.

The second mechanism for depressing the condition of the labourers was one nominally designed for their benefit, namely, the Poor Law. This dates from the time of Queen Elizabeth, and is said (though this seems scarcely credible) to have had philanthropic motives. The Poor Law decreed that every parish was responsible for seeing that none of its poor perished from hunger. If any man, woman, or child became destitute, it was the duty of the parish in which he or she was born to provide a bare maintenance. It was possible, if a man obtained work at a distance from his birth-place, for his new parish to take over the obligation of his support in case of necessity, but this was seldom done. A man was said to have a 'settlement' in the parish which was responsible for him. His own parish was unwilling to let him go, since it might become responsible for the expense of bringing him back from the other end of the kingdom. Even if his own parish would let him go, no other parish was likely to admit him unless he brought a certificate from his original parish admitting responsibility; but the parish officers were under no obligation to grant such certificates, which were, in practice, very difficult to obtain. There were, in theory, various methods of acquiring a new 'settlement,' but ways were found of preventing the poor from profiting by them. It was thus exceedingly difficult for a poor man to move away from his birth-place, however little need it might have for his labour.

An important step in the development of the Poor Law was taken by the inauguration of what is called the 'Speenhamland' system in 1795. At that time fear of revolution was in the air, as the Reign of Terror in France had only just come to an end. The harvest was bad, and there was great distress throughout England, leading to widespread food riots, in which women took the chief part. The governing classes became alarmed, and decided that they could not secure their own safety by repression alone. They tried to make the poor eat brown bread and potatoes and drink soup, but the poor, to the surprise of well-meaning persons, refused to depart from the best wheaten bread. Subsequent experience proved that they were right from an economic point of view: the Irish were persuaded to eat potatoes, with the result that, during the famine of 1845-7, they died in large numbers. Some men, more enlightened than their contemporaries,

advocated a minimum wage, and Whitbread brought in a Bill for that purpose in Parliament, but was defeated by the opposition of Pitt. The plan actually accepted, not universally, but throughout the greater part of England, was the system of supplementing a man's wages out of the poor rate, if they seemed insufficient to afford a bare living to himself and his family. A number of Berkshire magistrates assembled at Speenhamland (where the system was first introduced) estimated that a man needed three gallon loaves a week, while a woman or a child needed one and a half. If his wages were insufficient to purchase this amount of bread, they were to be supplemented from the poor rate to the necessary extent, which would, of course, fluctuate with the price of bread.

The relevant words of the original resolution are:

When the gallon loaf of second flour, weighing 8 lbs. 11 oz., shall cost one shilling, then every poor and industrious man shall have for his own support 3s. weekly, either produced by his own or his family's labour or an allowance from the poor rates, and for the support of his wife and every other of his family 1s. 6d. When the gallon loaf shall cost 1s. 4d., then every poor and industrious man shall have 4s. weekly for his own, and 1s. 1d. for the support of every other of his family. And so in proportion as the price of bread rises or falls (that is to say), 3d. to the man and 1d. to every other of the family, on every penny which the loaf rises above a shilling.¹

This system, with unimportant alterations, persisted until the reformed Parliament passed the new Poor Law in 1834. Whether the new Poor Law was any better than the old is a matter as to which debate is still possible; but as to the badness of the old system no debate is possible.

The natural result of the Speenhamland system was that employers paid low wages in order that part of the expense of the labour employed by them should be borne by the Poor Rate. In large numbers of rural parishes, most of the wage-earning population were paupers. There was a great development of a system, which already existed in 1795, by which labourers were wholly paid by the parish authorities, and were by them hired out to anyone who had work to be done; such labourers were called 'roundsmen' because they went the rounds of the parish.

¹ Quoted from Hammond, *Village Labourer*, 4th ed., p. 139.

The Speenhamland scale of living was not lavish; nevertheless it was higher than the scale adopted in many places after the end of the Napoleonic wars. It seems that the decline continued so long as the old Poor Law lasted, and that in 1831 the usual allowance for a family was one loaf a week per person and one over. As the Hammonds say:

In thirty-five years the standard had dropped, according to McCulloch's statement, as much as a third, and this not because of war or famine, for in 1826 England had had eleven years of peace, but in the ordinary course of the life of the nation. Is such a decline in the standard of life recorded anywhere in history?¹

From the standpoint of the upper classes, the system had many merits. They felt that what was paid out of the poor rate was charity, and therefore a proof of their benevolence; at the same time, wages were kept at starvation level by a method which just prevented discontent from developing into revolution. In France, revolution had immensely benefited the peasant, whose standard of life was much higher in 1815 than in 1789, in spite of the long wars and final defeat. It was probably the certainty, derived from the old Poor Law, that actual death would be averted by the parish authorities, which induced the rural poor of England to endure their misery patiently. It would have been difficult to devise a cheaper scheme for keeping the poor quiet. There were, it is true, occasional disturbances, more particularly the 'Last Revolt' in 1830. But they caused the government little trouble to suppress, and gave opportunities for savage sentences. The Poor Law impoverished the labourers and sapped their self-respect; it taught them respect for their 'betters,' while leaving all the wealth that they produced, beyond the absolute minimum required for subsistence, in the hands of the land-owners and farmers. It was at this period that landowners built the sham Gothic ruins called 'follies,' where they indulged in romantic sensibility about the past while they filled the present with misery and degradation.

¹ *Village Labourer*, p. 161. This was written before the Great War.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Industrial Life

IN rural life there were three classes, but in industrial life there were only two. The landowners, as a rule, did not choose to live amid the grime and smoke and squalor of factories or mines; even if, for a while, he lingered in a neighbourhood which had been rural in his father's time, he had little contact with the rising class of industrial employers, whom he regarded as vulgar and uneducated. The relations of the landowning class with the mill-owners were, for the most part, political rather than social. They had a common interest in suppressing disturbances, but on most points their interests diverged. There was an import duty on raw cotton which the manufacturers resented. The duty on grain increased the price of bread, and therefore the cost of keeping a labourer alive; the extra wages which this obliged the manufacturer to pay ultimately found their way into the pocket of the landowner in the shape of rent for agricultural land. The manufacturer desired free trade, the landowner believed in protection; the manufacturer was often a nonconformist, the landowner almost always belonged to the Church of England; the manufacturer had picked up his education as best he could, and had risen from poverty by thrift and industry, while the landowner had been at a public school and was the son of his father.

The upper classes, when they stopped to think, were aware that the new industrial life of the North had its importance. They knew that our manufactures had helped to beat Napoleon; some of them had heard of James Watt, and had a hazy impression that there were processes in which steam had been found useful. But this sort of thing seemed to them new-fangled and rather unpleasant; moreover, if it spread, it might interfere with the foxes and partridges. My grandfather, at one period of his education, had for his tutor Dr Cartwright, the inventor of the power loom, which introduced machinery and the factory system into the weaving trade. His pupil, in later life, observed:

'From Dr Cartwright, who was a man of much learning and great mechanical ingenuity, I acquired a taste for Latin poetry, which has never left me.' His reminiscences go on to give some examples of the pedagogue's 'mechanical ingenuity,' but not a word is said about the power loom, of which, for aught that appears, my grandfather never heard, although its inventor addressed to him 'a volume of letters and sonnets on moral and other interesting subjects.' Abroad England was known for its machinery, but upper-class England resented this view, and put the emphasis on agriculture. Even so late as 1844, this feeling is amusingly expressed by Kinglake in *Eothen*, in an imaginary interview between an English traveller and a Turkish Pasha:

Pasha: . . . whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Traveller (to the Dragoman): What does the Pasha mean by that whizzing? he does not mean to say, does he, that our Government will ever abandon their pledges to the Sultan?

Dragoman: No, your excellency, but he says the English talk by wheels and by steam.

Traveller: That's an exaggeration; but say that the English really have carried machinery to great perfection. Tell the Pasha (he'll be struck with that) that whenever we have any disturbances to put down, even at two or three hundred miles from London, we can send troops by the thousand to the scene of action in a few hours.

Dragoman (recovering his temper and freedom of speech): His Excellency, this Lord of Mudcombe, observes to your Highness, that whenever the Irish, or the French, or the Indians rebel against the English, whole armies of soldiers and brigades of artillery are dropped into a mighty chasm called Euston Square, and in the biting of a cartridge, they rise up again in Manchester, or Dublin, or Paris, or Delhi, and utterly exterminate the enemies of England from the face of the earth.

Pasha: I know it—I know all; the particulars have been faithfully related to me, and my mind comprehends locomotives. The armies of the English ride upon the vapours of boiling caldrons, and their horses are flaming coals!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Traveller (to his Dragoman): I wish to have the opinion of an unprejudiced Ottoman gentleman as to the prospects of our

English commerce and manufactures; just ask the Pasha to give me his views on the subject.

Pasha (after having received the communication of the Dragoman): The ships of the English swarm like flies; their printed calicoes cover the whole earth, and by the side of their swords the blades of Damascus are blades of grass. All India is but an item in the ledger-books of the merchants, whose lumber-rooms are filled with ancient thrones!—whirr! whirr! all by wheels!—whizz! whizz! all by steam!

Dragoman: The Pasha compliments the cutlery of England, and also the East India Company.

Traveller: The Pasha's right about the cutlery: I tried my scimitar with the common officers' swords belonging to our fellows at Malta, and they cut it like the leaf of a novel. Well (to the Dragoman), tell the Pasha I am exceedingly gratified to find that he entertains such a high opinion of our manufacturing energy, but I should like him to know, though, that we have got something in England besides that. These foreigners are always fancying that we have nothing but ships and railways, and East India Companies; do just tell the Pasha that our rural districts deserve his attention, and that even within the last two hundred years there has been an evident improvement in the culture of the turnip; and if he does not take any interest about that, at all events you can explain that we have our virtues in the country—that we are a truth-telling people, and, like the Osmanlees, are faithful in the performance of our promises. Oh! and by-the-by, whilst you are about it, you may as well just say, at the end, that the British yeoman is still, thank God! the British yeoman.

The British yeoman, as we have seen, was not still the British yeoman; Kinglake's traveller and his friends had transformed him into a starving, terrified pauper. But if the evils of rural England were great, those of industrial England were infinitely greater. The abominations in the mills and mines of those days are a trite theme, and yet one that remains all but unbearable. I have scarcely the heart to embark upon it, and yet something must be said.

Napoleon had been defeated by the snows of Russia and the children of England. The part played by the snows of Russia was acknowledged, since it could be attributed to Providence; but the part played by the children of England was passed over in silence, since it was shameful to the men of England. It was

Michelet, in his history, who first gave it due prominence in the shape of an imaginary conversation between Pitt and the employers: when they complain of his war taxes, he replies 'Take the children.' But it was a very long time after the end of the war before they let the children go again.

There were two systems of child labour: the older system, of pauper apprentices, and the newer system, of 'free' children. The older system was as follows. In London and in various other places, when a man received poor relief, the parish claimed the exclusive right of disposing of his children up to the age of twenty-one. Until 1767, almost all such children died, so that no problem arose for the authorities. In that year, however, a philanthropist named Hanway got an act passed which caused the children to be boarded out up to the age of six, instead of being kept in the workhouse. The consequence was that large numbers had the misfortune to survive, and the London authorities were faced with the problem of their disposal. The demand for child labour in the Lancashire mills supplied the solution. The children were apprenticed to some mill-owner, and became virtually his property until the age of twenty-one. If the mill worked continuously, day and night, the children were employed in two shifts of twelve hours each, each bed being shared between a day-child and a night-child. These were the more fortunate children. In mills which closed during the night, there was only one shift, and the children might have to work fifteen or sixteen hours every day.

Sometimes the mill-owners would go bankrupt, and the children would be taken in a cart to a lonely spot, and then turned out to shift for themselves. Unless this happened, the children never left the mill, except to go to church on Sundays if the machinery was cleaned in time. The possibility of insufficient religious instruction was almost the only point on which the general conscience of the time was sensitive; it was, however, somewhat moved by the frequent epidemics of which large numbers of the children died.

In the year 1802, Sir Robert Peel (father of the statesman), who had been himself a far from model employer, introduced and carried through Parliament a Bill 'for the better preservation of the Health and Morals of Apprentices and others employed in the cotton and other mills and the cotton and other manufactures'. The Bill in fact applied only to apprentices, and only to cotton. Sir Robert Peel thought that it 'would render the cotton

trade as correct and moral as it was important'. It prescribed that apprentices were not to work at night, and not more than twelve hours a day; they were to have some education every day, one new suit of clothes a year, and separate rooms for the boys and girls, with a whole bed for each. Every Sunday they were to be taught the Christian religion, and once a year they were to be examined by a clergyman. What could virtuous children want more?

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The employers protested that this Act was going to ruin their business. But it turned out that no one was going to force them to obey the law, and in practice little good resulted. Moreover, the employment of apprentices came to be more and more replaced by what were amusingly called 'free' children, i.e. those who went to work at the behest of their parents although they had not been deprived of the legal right to starve. The change was due to the substitution of steam for water power, which led to the removal of mills to the towns, where a local supply of child labour was available. The authorities refused the aid of the Poor Law to parents who refused to send their children to the mill, and owing to the competition of the new machines there were many weavers on the verge of starvation. The result was that many children were forced to begin earning their living at the age of six or seven, and sometimes even sooner. Their life as wage-earners is described by the Hammonds in *The Town Labourer*:

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When once children become wage earners, their working life differed little from that of the apprentices already described. They entered the mill gates at 5 or 6 a.m., they left them (at earliest) at 7 or 8 p.m., Saturdays included. All this time they were shut up in temperature varying from 75 to 85. The only respite during the fourteen or fifteen hours' confinement was afforded by meal hours, at most half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. But regular meal hours were privileges for adults only: to the children for three or four days a week they meant merely a change of work; instead of tending a machine that was running, they cleaned a machine that was standing still, snatching and swallowing their food as best they could in the midst of dust and flue. Children soon lost all relish for meals eaten in the factory. The flue used to choke their lungs. When spitting failed to expel it, emetics were freely given.

The work on which these children were engaged was often

described as light and easy, in fact almost as an amusement, requiring attention but not exertion. Three-fourths of the children were 'piecers'—that is, engaged in joining together or piecing the threads broken in the various roving and spinning machines. Others were employed in sweeping up the waste cotton, or removing and replacing bobbins. Fielden (1784–1849), the enlightened and humane employer who represented Oldham with Cobbett, and shares the laurels that grace the memory of Shaftesbury and Sadler, made an interesting experiment to measure the physical strain that the children endured. Struck with some statements made by factory delegates about the miles a child walked a day in following the spinning machine, he submitted the statements to a practical test in his own factory, and found to his amazement that in twelve hours the distance covered was not less than twenty miles. There were indeed short intervals of leisure, but no seat to sit on, sitting being contrary to rules. The view that the piecers' work was really light was best given by Mr Tufnell, one of the Factory Commissioners. Three-fourths of the children, he says, are engaged as piecers at mules, and whilst the mules are receding there is nothing to be done and the piecers stand idle for about three-quarters of a minute. From this he deduces the conclusion that if a child is nominally working twelve hours a day, '*for nine hours he performs no actual labour*', or if, as is generally the case, he attends two mules, then 'his leisure is six hours instead of nine'.

The fourteen or fifteen hours confinement for six days a week were the 'regular' hours: in busy times hours were elastic and sometimes stretched to a length that seems almost incredible. Work from 3 a.m. to 10 p.m. was not unknown; in Mr Varley's mill, all through the summer, they worked from 3.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. At the mill, aptly called 'Hell Bay' for two months at a time, they not only worked regularly from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., but for two nights each week worked all through the night as well. The more humane employers contented themselves when busy with a spell of sixteen hours (5 a.m. to 9 p.m.).

It was physically impossible to keep such a system working at all except by the driving force of terror. The overseers who gave evidence before Sadler's Committee did not deny that their methods were brutal. They said that they had either to exact the full quota of work, or to be dismissed, and in these circumstances pity was a luxury that men with families could not allow themselves. The punishments for arriving late in the morning had to

be made cruel enough to overcome the temptation to tired children to take more than three or four hours in bed. One witness before Sadler's Committee had known a child, who had reached home at eleven o'clock one night, get up at two o'clock next morning in panic and limp to the mill gate. In some mills scarcely an hour passed in the long day without the sound of beating and cries of pain. Fathers beat their own children to save them from a worse beating by the overseers. In the afternoon the strain grew so severe that the heavy iron stick known as the billy-roller was in constant use, and, even then, it happened not infrequently that a small child, as he dozed, tumbled into the machine beside him to be mangled for life, or, if he were more fortunate, to find a longer Lethe than his stolen sleep. In one mill, where the owner, a Mr Gott, had forbidden the use of anything but a ferule, some of the slubbers tried to keep the children awake, when they worked from 5 in the morning to 9 at night, by encouraging them to sing hymns. As the evening wore on the pain and fatigue and tension on the mind became insupportable. Children would implore any one who came near to tell them how many hours there were still before them. A witness told Sadler's Committee that his child, a boy of six, would say to him, "Father, what o'clock is it?" I have said perhaps it is seven o'clock. "Oh, it is two hours to nine o'clock? I cannot bear it."¹

As the circumstances became known, an agitation arose for an Act to prohibit the worst abuses, with which we shall be concerned in a later chapter. For the present, I shall only observe that an Act was passed in 1819, but proved wholly ineffective, as the work of inspection was left to magistrates and clergymen. To the relief of employers, experience showed that magistrates and clergymen had no objection to law-breaking when its purpose was merely the torture of children.

It was not only in cotton mills that children suffered; they were subjected to conditions quite as terrible in the coal mines. There were, for example, the trappers, generally from five to eight years old, who 'sat in a little hole, made at the side of the door, holding a string in their hand, for twelve hours. As a rule they were in the dark, but sometimes a good-natured collier would give them a bit of candle.' A girl of eight, according to the Report of the Children's Employment Committee in 1842, said: 'I have to trap without a light, and I'm scared. I go at four and sometimes at

¹ *The Town Labourer* (1932 ed.), pp. 157-60.

half-past three in the morning and come out at five and half-past (in the afternoon). I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark: I dare not sing then.'

It was by the labour of children under such conditions that Lord Melbourne acquired the fortune which enabled him to be civilized and charming. Castlereagh, as Lord Londonderry, was a very important mine-owner. Indeed, the chief difference between mines and cotton was that many of the leading aristocrats of both parties were directly interested in the mines, and they showed themselves quite as callous as the most brutal self-made mill-owners. The agony of tortured children is an undertone to the elegant conversation of Holland House.

I have spoken of the children, because that is the most terrible aspect of industrialism a hundred years ago. But such sufferings for children would have been impossible unless their parents had been in a condition of despair. Hours for adults were almost incredibly long, wages very low, and housing conditions abominable. Industrial workers, many of whom had till recently lived in the country, were herded together in new, ill-built, smoky, and insanitary towns, some even lived in cellars, and cholera and typhus were endemic. Skilled handicraftsmen were reduced to destitution by the new machines; weavers, who had formerly been prosperous, could only earn 6s 6d a week. Combinations among wage-earners were illegal until 1824, and though trade unions existed, they were necessarily small and ineffectual so long as they had to be kept secret. The government employed spies whose business it was to induce poor men to utter revolutionary sentiments. The spies themselves, with great trouble, organized little movements, and their dupes were hanged or transported.

The men guilty of these atrocities were human beings: you and I share their human nature, and might, I suppose, in other circumstances, have done as they did. Meanwhile their grandchildren protest, in the name of humanity, against what is done in Soviet Russia, and inflict savage sentences upon men who attempt to prevent the recurrence of some of the old evils in the young industrialism of India.

SECTION B

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RADICALS

CHAPTER EIGHT

Malthus

THINKING is not one of the natural activities of man; it is a product of disease, like a high temperature in illness. In France before the Revolution, and in England in the early nineteenth century, the disease in the body politic caused certain men to think important thoughts, which developed into the science of political economy. This science, in combination with the philosophy of Bentham and the psychology which James Mill learnt from Hartley, produced the school of Philosophical Radicals, who dominated British politics for fifty years. They were a curious set of men: rather uninteresting, quite without what is called 'vision', prudent, rational, arguing carefully from premisses which were largely false to conclusions which were in harmony with the interests of the middle class. John Stuart Mill, their last representative, had less brains than Bentham or Malthus or Ricardo, but surpassed them in imagination and sympathy, with the result that he failed to remain orthodox and even allowed himself to coquette with Socialism. But the founders of the sect, like Mr Murdstone in *David Copperfield*, would tolerate no weakness.

Adam Smith, the founder of British economics, falls outside our period, since the *Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776. He was important because of the doctrine of *laissez faire* which he took over from the French, and because he first set forth the argument in favour of free trade. But he has not the qualities possessed by the founders of sects. He is sensible, moderate, unsystematic; he always admits limitations, as, for example, in his famous argument for the Navigation Acts on the ground that defence is more important than opulence. He is a pleasant old gentlemen, with the comfortable eighteenth-century characteris-

tic of holding no doctrine more firmly than a gentleman should. He did, however, believe, within the boundaries of common sense, that the interests of the individual and of society are, broadly speaking, in harmony, and that enlightened self-interest dictates the same conduct as would be dictated by benevolence. This principle was used later to prove that the self-interest of the manufacturer is in accordance with the true interest of the community, and that the interest of the community must be identical with the true interest of the wage-earner. It followed that when the wage-earner resisted the employer, he was foolish.

More important for our period, and indeed for the world, is Malthus, whose *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1st ed. 1798; 2nd ed. 1803) has profoundly affected all subsequent theory and practice. Malthus, though he was born in 1766, seems to have never shared the optimism which was common before 1789. Characteristically, when Pitt, at the age of 24, became Prime Minister in 1783, Malthus was shocked that so young a man should hold so important an office, while his father thought otherwise. His father was a perfectionist, a friend of Rousseau, some say his executor, though this appears to be an error; he was an ardent admirer of Godwin's *Political Justice* and of Condorcet's *Progrès de l'esprit humain*. He was fond of disputation, and used to encourage his family to set up theses and argue them with him. His son, who was temperamentally annoyed by his belief in progress, invented, at first as a mere weapon in argument, what Bagehot describes as 'an apparatus for destroying cheerfulness'. This weapon turned out so potent that Malthus adopted it for good and all. It was his famous theory of population.

It was true that there was much occasion for gloom in 1797, when Malthus first thought of his theory. The French Revolution had passed, through the Terror, to the corrupt and uninspiring rule of the *Directoire*. Liberal ideas were almost dead in England; taxes and poverty were increasing side by side; patriots had not yet had the satisfaction of Nelson's victories; the Navy was in a state of mutiny; the Radicals had been imprisoned by Pitt, but Ireland was on the threshold of the rebellion of 1798. It was not difficult to foresee a long war, a long tyranny, hunger and periodical famine, the extinction of all the hopes out of which the French Revolution had grown. Gloomy doctrines were the order of the day, and Malthus set to work to supply them.

His *Essay*, as it first appeared in 1798, was a rather slight work,

almost wholly deductive. Between that date and 1803, he travelled extensively in Europe, collecting facts everywhere in support of his thesis. The result, in the second edition, was a book which is impressive by its massiveness, and by the appearance which it presents of inductive support from all the countries of the world. The Table of Contents alone is formidable: 'Population in Russia', 'Population in Sweden', 'Population in Germany', and so on. By this time the reader is already half convinced of whatever may follow.

The essence of Malthus's doctrine is simplicity itself. If nothing checked the growth of population, it would double every twenty years or so; in a hundred years it would be 32 times what it is now, in two hundred years 1,024 times, in three hundred years 32,768 times, and so on. Clearly this sort of thing does not happen, and cannot happen. Why?

There are, says Malthus, only three ways in which the population can be kept down; they are: moral restraint, vice, and misery. Of moral restraint on a large scale he has little hope until all the population shall have been educated in the true principles of political economy. Of 'vice' he cannot, as a clergyman, speak otherwise than in terms of reprobation; moreover, while he admits that it may have been an important check to population at certain periods such as that of the Roman Empire, he does not expect it, at most times, to be very effective. He proves that the losses caused by epidemics are soon made good, and he concludes that misery is the chief preventive of excessive population. It is because people die of hunger that the population is not greater than it is.

But, it may be said, if there are more people to work the land, it can be made to produce more food. Why then should an increase of numbers cause anyone to starve? At this point, the argument depends upon what was afterwards called the law of diminishing returns. If twice as much labour as before is expended on a given piece of land, and also twice as much capital, the produce will be increased, but it will not be doubled. If the labour and capital are expended upon a piece of land which previously lay waste, the result, in general, will be the same, since it may be assumed that the best land is cultivated first. All this, of course, is not true when the population is very sparse; pioneers in a new country tend to be benefited by the arrival of new settlers. But in an old settled country, such as those of Europe, it is in general true that, if the population is increased without

any concomitant progress in the art of agriculture, the amount of food per head will be diminished. There comes at last a point at which, if the population were further increased, one man's labour would produce less than one man's food. At this point, hunger sets a limit to possible increase.

Those who form the poorest class in a society must, so Malthus contends, be as poor as is compatible with survival, since otherwise their numbers would increase until that point had been reached. There may be short exceptional periods, as, for example, after the Black Death, but they cannot last long, since more children will survive until the old condition is restored. It is therefore a good thing that some are richer than others, for, in any system of equality, all would be at the lowest level; on this ground he rejects the schemes of Godwin, Owen, and other reformers. 'It is absolutely certain,' he says, 'that the *only* mode consistent with the laws of morality and religion, of giving to the poor the largest share of the property of the rich, without sinking the whole community in misery, is the exercise on the part of the poor of prudence in marriage, and of economy both before and after it.' Malthus thus makes a clean sweep of all schemes of human amelioration which fail to tackle the population problem. And this problem must be tackled by 'moral restraint'; other methods, which have become associated with his name, he speaks of with horror as 'improper arts'.

Malthus, naturally, objects to the Poor Laws, though he does not think they can be abolished suddenly. It is impossible, he says, to prevent poverty; it would be possible to make the poor rich and the rich poor, but some are bound to be poor so long as the present proportion of food to population continues. If the poor rate were made higher, that would not enable each labourer to have his share of meat: the amount of meat in the country would be the same, and since there is not enough for every one, the price would go up.

He does not believe in the possibility of Europe obtaining any considerable part of its food-supply from other continents. 'In the wilderness of speculation,' he says, 'it has been suggested (of course more in jest than in earnest) that Europe should grow its corn in America, and devote itself solely to manufactures and commerce, as the best sort of division of the labour of the globe.'

There is only one hope for the working classes, and that is education as a means of inculcating moral restraint. Peacock, in

Melincourt, introduced Malthus under the name of Mr Fax, and represents him as trying 'education' on a yokel who is about to be married:

Mr Fax looked with great commiseration on this bridal pair, and determined to ascertain if they had a clear notion of the evils that awaited them in consequence of the rash step they were about to take. He therefore accosted them with an observation that the Reverend Mr Portpipe was not at leisure, but would be in a few minutes. 'In the meantime,' said he, 'I stand here as the representative of general reason, to ask if you have duly weighed the consequence of your present proceeding.'

The Bridegroom: General Reason! I be's no sojer man, and bean't countable to no General whatzomecomedever. We bean't under martial law, be we? Voine times indeed if General Reason be to interpose between a poor man and his sweetheart.

Mr Fax: That is precisely the case which calls most loudly for such an interposition.

The Bridegroom: If General Reason waits till I or Zukey calls loudly vor'n, he'll wait long enough. Woan't he, Zukey?

The Bride: Ees, zure, Robin.

Mr Fax: General reason, my friend, I assure you, has nothing to do with martial law, nor with any other mode of arbitrary power, but with authority that has truth for its foundation, benevolence for its end, and the whole universe for its sphere of action.

The Bridegroom (scratching his head): There be a mort o' voine words, but I suppose you means to zay as how this General Reason be a Methody preacher; but I be's true earthy-ducks church, and zo be Zukey: bean't you, Zukey?

The Bride: Ees, zure, Robin.

The Bridegroom: And we has nothing to do wi' General Reason neither on us. Has we, Zukey?

The Bride: No, zure, Robin.

Mr Fax: Well, my friend, be that as it may, you are going to be married?

The Bridegroom: Why, I think zo, zur, wi' General Reason's leave. Bean't we, Zukey?

The Bride: Ees, zure, Robin.

Mr Fax: And are you fully aware, my honest friend, what marriage is?

The Bridegroom: Vor zartin I be: Zukey and I ha' got it by heart out o' t' Book o' Common Prayer. Ha'n't we, Zukey? (This time Susan did not think proper to answer.) It be ordained that zuch persons as hav'n't the gift of—(Susan gave him such a sudden and violent pinch on the arm that his speech ended in a roar.) Od rabbit me! that wur a twinger! I'll have my revenge, howzomecomedever. (And he imprinted a very emphatical kiss on the lips of his blushing bride that greatly scandalized Mr Fax.)

Mr Fax: Do you know, that in all likelihood, in the course of six years, you will have as many children?

The Bridegroom: The more the merrier, zur. Bean't it, Zukey? (Susan was mute again.)

Mr Fax: I hope it may prove so, my friend; but I fear you will find the more the sadder. What are your occupations?

The Bridegroom: Anan, zur?

Mr Fax: What do you do to get your living?

The Bridegroom: Works vor Varmer Brownstout: zows and reaps, threshes, and goes to market wi' corn and cattle, turns to plough-tail when hap chances, cleans and feeds horses, hedges and ditches, fells timber, gathers in t' orchard, brews ale, and drinks it, and gets vourteen shill'n's a week for my trouble. And Zukey here ha' laid up a mint o' money; she wur dairymaid at Varmer Cheesecurd's, and ha' gotten vour pounds seventeen shill'n's and ninepence in t' old chest wi' three vlat locks and a padlock. Ha'n't you, Zukey?

The Bride: Ees, zure, Robin.

Mr Fax: It does not appear to me, my worthy friend, that your fourteen shillings a week, even with Mrs Susan's consolidated fund of four pounds seventeen shillings and ninepence, will be altogether adequate to the maintenance of such a family as you seem likely to have.

The Bridegroom: Why, sir, in t' virst pleace, I doan't know what be Zukey's intentions in that respect—Od rabbit it, Zukey! doan't pinch zo—and in t' next pleace, wi' all due submission to you and General Reason the Methody preacher, I takes it to be our look-out, and none o' nobody's else.

Mr Fax: But it is somebody's else, for this reason; that if you cannot maintain your own children, the parish must do it for you.

The Bridegroom: Vor zartin—in a zort o' way; and bad enough at best. But I wants no more to do wi' t' parish than parish wi' me.

Mr Fax: I dare say you do not, at present. But, my good friend, when the cares of a family come upon you, your independence of spirit will give way to necessity; and if, by any accident, you are thrown out of work, as in the present times many honest fellows are, what will you do then?

The Bridegroom: Do the best I can, measter, az I always does, and nobody can't do no better.

Mr Fax: Do you suppose, then, you are doing the best you can now, in marrying with such a doubtful prospect before you? How will you bring up your children?

The Bridegroom: Why, in the vear o' the Lord, to be zure.

Mr Fax: Of course: but how will you bring them up to get their living?

The Bridegroom: That's as thereafter may happen. They woan't starve, I'se warrant 'em, if they teakes after their veyther. But I zees now who General Reason be. He be one o' your sinecure vundholder peaper-money taxing men, as isn't satisfied wi' takin' t' bread out o' t' poor man's mouth, and zending his chilern to army and navy, and vactories, and suchlike, but wants to take away his wife into t' bargain.

Mr Fax: There, my honest friend, you have fallen into a radical mistake, which I shall try to elucidate for your benefit. It is owing to poor people having more children than they can maintain that those children are obliged to go to the army and navy, and consequently that statesmen and conquerors find so many ready instruments for the oppression and destruction of the human species: it follows, therefore, that if people would not marry till they could be certain of maintaining all their children comfortably at home—

The Bridegroom: Lord love you, that be all mighty voine rigmarol; but the short and the long be this: I can't live without Zukey, nor Zukey without I, can you, Zukey?

The Bride: No, zure, Robin.

It should seem that the process of educating men up to the degree of 'moral restraint' demanded by the combination of Malthus's economics and ethics might be somewhat lengthy. Nevertheless, he agreed with almost all the other reformers of his time in regarding popular education as essential to any radical improvement. Some men object to education, he says, on the ground that the poor, if taught to read, would read Tom Paine; but for his part he agrees with Adam Smith that the more they

are educated the less likely they are to be led away by inflammatory writings.

There is, he maintains, no *right* to support: if a man cannot live by his own exertions, or if a child cannot live by the exertions of its parents, the community is under no obligation to provide subsistence.

But as it appears clearly, both from theory and experience, that, if the claim were allowed, it would soon increase beyond the possibility of satisfying it; and that the practical attempt to do so would involve the human race in the most wretched and universal poverty; it follows necessarily that our conduct, which denies the right, is more suited to the present state of our being, than our declamations which allow it.

The great Author of nature, indeed, with that wisdom which is apparent in all his works, has not left this conclusion to the cold and speculative consideration of general consequences. By making the passion of self-love beyond comparison stronger than the passion of benevolence, he has at once impelled us to that line of conduct, which is essential to the preservation of the human race.

The advantages to the community which flow from individual selfishness are repeatedly emphasized by Malthus; it is for this reason that a beneficent Providence has made us all such egoists. But the egoism that does good is of a special kind: it is prudent, calculating, and self-restrained, not impulsive or thoughtless. Malthus himself had three children in the first four years of his marriage, and after that no more, owing, one presumes, to 'moral restraint'. Mrs Malthus's opinion of the principle of population is not recorded.

Owing largely to Malthus, British Philosophical Radicalism, unlike the Radicalism of all other ages and countries, laid more stress on prudence than on any other virtue; it was cold at heart, and hostile to the life of the emotions. At all points it was the antithesis of romantic mediaevalism. Malthus was, of course, bitterly attacked, but the attacks were all based on sentiment or on orthodox religion. In repelling theological attacks he was in a strong position, being himself a clergyman free from the remotest suspicion of heresy. In repelling attacks based upon sentiment, he had only to appeal to the patent facts as they existed in England at that time. To his contemporaries, no reasoned refutation

of his theory appeared possible, with the result that all who were capable of being influenced by argument came to agree with him. For the first eighty years from the publication of his *Essay*, he profoundly influenced opinion; since then, he has influenced the birth-rate, though in ways which he would have deplored. His influence on opinion declined as his influence on the birth-rate increased, but the latter is even more important than the former. If a man's greatness is to be measured by his effect upon human life, few men have been greater than Malthus.

To judge what was true and what false in the doctrine of Malthus is possible now as it was not in his own day. Great Britain, during the Napoleonic wars, was compelled to rely almost entirely upon home-grown food; there was wide-spread misery, and the population was rapidly increasing. The Poor Law, since it gave relief in proportion to the number of children in a family, appeared to afford a direct incentive to improvident marriages. It was thought, until recently, that the rapid increase of population¹ at that time was due to an increase in the birth-rate, but it is now generally held that the main cause was a diminution in the death-rate. It may seem strange that the death-rate should have diminished during so painful a period, but the fact seems indubitable. The causes enumerated by Clapham² are: 'The conquest of small-pox, the curtailment ofagueish disorders through drainage, the disappearance of scurvy as a disease of the land, improvements in obstetrics leading to a reduction in the losses both of infant and of maternal life in childbed, the spreading of hospitals, dispensaries and medical schools.' The birth-rate was slightly less in 1811 than in 1790, and neither the Poor Law nor child labour in factories appears to have affected it.

Whatever may have been the cause of the increase of population, the fact of the increase became undeniable as soon as the results of the second census, that of 1811, were known. Now Malthus is unquestionably in the right in maintaining that, apart from technical improvements in agriculture, a limited area, such as that of Great Britain, which has already a considerable population, cannot produce the food needed for a larger population without a lowering of the standard of life, and must, if population

¹ The first census of Great Britain (without Ireland) was in 1801. The figures of the first four censuses were:

1801	..	10,943,000		1821	14,392,000
1811	..	12,597,000		1831	16,539,000

² Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain* (1926), Vol. I, p. 55.

continues to increase, soon reach the point where a further increase is impossible from lack of food. Ultimately, this proposition is true not only of Great Britain, but of the world. There are parts of the world—China, for instance—where its truth is evident and tragic.

But since Malthus wrote, the limitations to the truth of his theory have turned out to be unexpectedly important. Railways and steamships brought it about that 'Europe should grow its corn in America,' which Malthus thought a mere jest. Technical improvements in agriculture have proved far more important than he supposed possible. But above all the increased prosperity of wage-earners, so far from leading to a higher birth-rate, led to a very rapid diminution, which was still further accelerated when, after the Great War, the standard of comfort again declined. This is perhaps not a refutation of anything that Malthus said, but it has destroyed the importance of his theory so far as the white races are concerned. In Asia it remains important.

CHAPTER NINE

Bentham

THE Philosophical Radicals were commonly known as the Benthamites, and most of them regarded Jeremy Bentham as their leader; it is doubtful, however, whether he would ever have occupied this position but for the intervention of James Mill. He is certainly one of the most singular characters in history. Born in 1748, he might have been expected to have belonged to an earlier period than that with which we are concerned. The fact is, however, that his long life (he died in 1832) is divided into three phases, of which the third and most important began when he was already an old man; in fact, he was sixty years old when he became converted to the principle of democracy.

His antecedents were not such as to make it probable that he would be a reformer. His family were Jacobite, but had sufficient prudence not to become involved in either the '15 or the '45. His grandfather made money in business, and his father was well off throughout his life. He took great pains with Jeremy's education, which apparently served, to some extent, as a model for John Stuart Mill's. At the age of seven Jeremy was sent to Westminster School; at the age of twelve he went to Oxford, and at fifteen he took his B.A. His father, who was an arrant snob, wished him to associate with lords and grand people at the university, and was always willing to supply him with the extra pocket money required for gambling when in their society. But Jeremy was a shy boy, and preferred books to play. Like Malthus, though in a different way, he reversed the usual relation of father and son: while the father urged frivolous pleasures, the boy insisted upon industry and sobriety. To please his father, he was called to the Bar; to please himself, he wrote on law reform instead of practising law. He fell in love, but his father, though he had displeased his father by a love-match which had turned out perfectly happy, objected to Jeremy's choice because she was not rich. Jeremy gave her up rather than devote himself to money-making, but he suffered severely. His letters to his brother, which

were very intimate, show him at this time as assuming a devil-may-care cynicism, something of which, in a pedantic and purely theoretical form, survives in his later philosophy. To those who only knew him in later life, he was a kindly eccentric, almost unbelievably shy, and completely imprisoned in a self-imposed routine; but in this is to be seen, I think, the abiding influence of his conflicts with his father and his renunciation of emotional happiness.¹

Robert Owen, who made his acquaintance in 1813 in spite of Bentham's aversion to meeting strangers, has left an account of their first meeting:

'After some preliminary communication with our mutual friends James Mill and Francis Place, his then two chief counsellors, and some correspondence between him and myself, it was at length arrived at that I was to come to his hermit-like retreat at a particular hour, and that I was, upon entering, to proceed upstairs, and we were to meet half-way upon the stairs. I pursued these instructions, and he, in great trepidation, met me, and taking my hand, while his whole frame was agitated with the excitement, he hastily said—"Well! well! It is all over. We are introduced. Come into my study!"'

Fifteen years later he met Owen's son, and at parting said: 'God bless you, if there be such a being, and at all events, my young friend, take care of yourself.'

In 1814 and the three following years, Bentham spent half his time at an old house called Ford Abbey, in Devonshire, where, by his own account, life was spent in a round of gaieties:

It is the theatre of great felicity to a number of people, and that not very inconsiderable. Not an angry word is ever heard in it. Mrs S. (the housekeeper) governs like an angel. Neighbours all highly cordial, even though not visited. Music and dancing, though I hate dancing. Gentle and simple mix. Crowds come and dance, and Mrs S. at the head of them.

But Francis Place's account is, I fear, nearer the truth:

All our days are alike, so an account of one may do for all. Mill is up between five and six; he and John compare his

¹ He made an unvarying practice of walking round his garden before breakfast and after dinner. These walks he described as his 'ante-jentacular and post-prandial circumambulations.'

proofs, John reading the copy and his father the proof. Willie and Clara are in the saloon before seven, and as soon as the proofs are done with, John goes to the farther end of the room to teach his sisters. When this has been done, and part of the time while it is doing, he learns geometry; this continues to nine o'clock, when breakfast is ready.

Mr Bentham rises soon after seven, and about eight gets to his employment. I rise at six and go to work; at nine breakfast in the parlour—present, Mrs Mill, Mill, I, John, and Colls.

Breakfast ended, Mill hears Willie and Clara, and then John. Lessons are heard under a broad balcony, walking from end to end, the breakfast parlour on one hand and pots of flowers rising one above another as high as your head on the other hand; this place is in the front of the Abbey. All the lessons and readings are performed aloud, and occupy full three hours, say till one o'clock.

From nine to twelve Mr Bentham continues working; from twelve to one he performs upon an organ in the saloon.

From breakfast time to one o'clock I am occupied in learning Latin; this is also done aloud in the walks, and already I have conquered the substantives and adjectives. During this period Colls, who is a good boy, gets a lesson of Latin from Mill, and of French from me: his is a capital situation for a boy of genius.

At one we all three walk in the lanes and fields for an hour. At two all go to work again till dinner at six, when Mrs Mill, Mill, Bentham, I and Colls, dine together. We have soup or fish, or both, meat, pudding, generally fruit, viz. melons, strawberries, gooseberries, currants, grapes; no wine. The first day I came, wine was put upon the table; but as I took none, none has since made its appearance. After dinner, Mill and I take a sharp walk for two hours, say, till a quarter past eight, then one of us alternately walks with Mr Bentham for an hour; then comes tea, at which we read the periodical publications; and eleven o'clock comes but too soon, and we all go to bed.

Mrs Mill marches in great style round the green in front of the house for about half an hour before breakfast and again after dinner with all the children, till their bed-time.

The intellectual influences which formed Bentham's mind were mainly French. Hume, it is true, influenced his philosophy, and Hartley, by the principle of association, influenced his psychology. His ethical first principle, almost in his own words, is

to be found in Hutcheson's *Inquiry concerning moral good and evil*. The moral evil of a given action, according to Hutcheson, 'is as the *Degree* of Misery, and *Number* of Sufferers; so that, *that Action is best*, which accomplishes the *Greatest Happiness* for the *Greatest Number*.¹ But it was the French pre-revolution philosophers who formed the tone of his mind. He admired Voltaire, and was an enthusiastic follower of Helvetius. He read Helvetius in 1769, and immediately determined to devote his life to the principles of legislation. 'What Bacon was to the physical world, Helvetius was to the moral. The moral world has therefore had its Bacon; but its Newton is yet to come.' It is not hazardous to surmise that Bentham aspired to be the Newton of the moral world.

When he came to know Beccaria *On Crimes and Punishments*, he thought even more highly of him than of Helvetius:

'Oh, my master,' he exclaimed, 'first evangelist of Reason, you who have raised your Italy so far above England, and I would add above France, were it not that Helvetius, without writing on the subject of laws, had already assisted you and had provided you with your fundamental ideas; you who speak reason about laws, when in France there was spoken only jargon: a jargon, however, which was reason itself as compared with the English jargon; you who have made so many useful excursions into the path of utility, what is there left for us to do?—Never to turn aside from that path.'²

His journey to Paris in 1770, at the age of twenty-two, served to confirm French influence; indeed he remained throughout his life, in many respects, a French philosopher of the age of Louis XVI. The only other journey which had any effect upon him was his visit to Russia in 1785. His brother Samuel (afterwards General Sir Samuel Bentham) was employed by the Empress Catherine in an attempt to modernize Russian agriculture, a task which proved as difficult then as now. Jeremy had hopes that Catherine would introduce a scientific penal code drawn up by himself: 'In Russia,' he wrote, 'as much pains has been taken to make men think as in some governments to prevent them to think.'³ But unfortunately his brother, who had been doing well

¹ Quoted by Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³ Everatt, *The Education of Bentham*, p. 153.

at Court, wished to marry a lady-in-waiting, which Catherine regarded as presumption; he therefore fell into disfavour, and Jeremy and codification along with him.

Wherever Bentham might be, whether on the Black Sea, or in his chambers, or at Queen Square Place, he always wrote voluminously every day. What he had written he put away carefully in pigeon holes, and there it remained unless some kind friend retrieved it. The consequence was that in England he remained obscure, and such work as he did publish attracted little attention. In 1788, however, he met the Genevese Dumont, who became his enthusiastic disciple, secured manuscripts from him, translated them into French, and caused them to become widely known on the Continent. Moreover Dumont supplied the material for the speeches of Mirabeau, who was too busy making love and eluding creditors to have time for research. Long extracts from Bentham were published by Dumont in Mirabeau's paper, the *Courrier de Province*. In 1789, Bentham wrote to Mirabeau:

I am proud, as becomes me, of your intentions in my favour. I look out with impatience for the period of their accomplishment. Meanwhile, in addition to the honour of calling the Comte de Mirabeau my translator and reviewer, permit me that of styling myself his correspondent.

So great was his fame in France that the Assembly elected him a French citizen. But he was still a Tory, and soon became disgusted with the Revolution; and at about the same time, the Revolution forgot him. Elsewhere, however, his reputation increased steadily. Alexander's liberal minister Speransky greatly admired him; Alexander, in 1814, asked him to help in drafting a code. In Spain, and throughout Latin America, he was revered. The Cortes voted that his works should be printed at the public expense. Borrow, in *The Bible in Spain*, tells how he was arrested in a remote part of Galicia for selling the scriptures, but was immediately liberated when the magistrate found he was a countryman of 'the great Baintham'. Aaron Burr, former Vice-President of the United States, invited him to come to Mexico where the one was to be Emperor and the other was to be legislator. (It does not appear what the Mexicans thought of the scheme.) He thought of going to Caracas, to enjoy the climate and make a penal code for Venezuela. There was no end to his fame in distant regions. As Hazlitt says:

Mr Bentham is one of those persons who verify the old adage, that 'A prophet has most honour out of his own country.' His reputation lies at the circumference; and the lights of his understanding are reflected, with increasing lustre, on the other side of the globe. His name is little known in England, better in Europe, best of all in the plains of Chili and the mines of Mexico. He has offered constitutions for the New World, and legislated for future times. The people of Westminster, where he lives, hardly dream of such a person; but the Siberian savage has received cold comfort from his lunar aspect, and may say to him with Caliban—'I know thee, and thy dog and thy bush!' The tawny Indian may hold out the hand of fellowship to him across the GREAT PACIFIC. We believe that the Empress Catherine corresponded with him; and we know that the Emperor Alexander called upon him, and presented him with his miniature in a gold snuff-box, which the philosopher, to his eternal honour, returned. Mr Hobhouse is a greater man at the hustings, Lord Rolle at Plymouth Dock; but Mr Bentham would carry it hollow, on the score of popularity, at Paris or Pegu. The reason is, that our author's influence is purely intellectual. He has devoted his life to the pursuit of abstract and general truths, and to those studies—

"That waft a *thought* from Indus to the Pole"—

and has never mixed himself up with personal intrigues or party politics. He once, indeed, stuck up a handbill to say that he (Jeremy Bentham) being of sound mind, was of opinion that Sir Samuel Romilly was the most proper person to represent Westminster; but this was the whim of the moment. Otherwise, his reasonings, if true at all, are true everywhere alike: his speculations concern humanity at large, and are not confined to the hundred or the bills of mortality. It is in moral as in physical magnitude. The little is seen best near: the great appears in its proper dimensions, only from a more commanding point of view, and gains strength with time, and elevation from distance!

Mr Bentham is very much among philosophers what La Fontaine was among poets:—in general habits and in all but his professional pursuits, he is a mere child. He has lived for the last forty years in a house in Westminster, overlooking the Park, like an anchorit in his cell, reducing law to a system, and the mind of man to a machine. He scarcely ever goes out, and sees

very little company. The favoured few, who have the privilege of the *entrée*, are always admitted one by one. He does not like to have witnesses to his conversation. He talks a great deal, and listens to nothing but facts.

Bentham, meanwhile, had become involved in the unfortunate project which filled the middle period of his life with bitterness and financial embarrassment. He (or perhaps his brother) invented a new sort of prison, called a '*Panopticon*', which was to be in the shape of a star, so that a gaoler sitting in the middle could see the door of every cell; nay, by a combined system of mirrors and blinds, the gaoler is to see the prisoner while the prisoner cannot see the gaoler. He thought the same idea could be applied to factories, hospitals, asylums, and schools. There were those who objected to this plan, except in the case of prisons, in the name of liberty. But Bentham believed happiness to be the goal, not liberty, and he was not convinced that liberty is necessary to happiness. 'Call them soldiers, call them monks, call them machines, so they were but happy ones, I should not care. Wars and storms are best to read of, but peace and calms are better to endure.'¹

It must not be supposed that Bentham, at any time, confined himself wholly to the *Panopticon*; his activities were always multifarious; for example, in 1800 he invented a *frigidarium*. But for many years the *Panopticon* was his main pre-occupation, and he did everything in his power to induce the British Government to construct at least one prison according to his plans. He secured a half-promise, bought land for the purpose, found that the government had changed its mind, and lost the bulk of his fortune. He attributed his failure to the personal influence of George III, and there are those who regard this as the cause of his later republicanism. In other times and places his scheme was approved; the Emperor Alexander had a panopticon built in St Petersburg, and the State of Illinois had one constructed in 1920. But the British Government remained obdurate. At length, in 1813, he was awarded £20,000 to compensate him for expenses incurred as a result of governmental encouragement. But already in 1808 he had entered upon the third and most important phase of his life by his alliance with James Mill.

When Bentham became a Radical, he made no change in his general philosophy, which remained just what it had been in his

¹ Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, p. 84.

youth. He was not a profound philosopher, but he was clear and logical and quite sure of his own rightness. His philosophy had two foundations, one psychological, the other ethical. He states these succinctly in a note written only for his own benefit:

Association Principle. Hartley. The bond of connection between ideas and language: and between the ideas and ideas.
Greatest Happiness Principle. Priestley. Applied to every branch of morals in detail, by Bentham: a part of the way previously by Helvetius.

There is something to be said about each of these principles. The 'association principle', which Bentham attributes to Hartley, is the familiar 'association of ideas', which caused me, in speaking to Mr Upton Sinclair, to say: 'I hope Mrs Lewis is well.' Sometimes the consequences of the principle are less unhappy, as when the sight of beef makes you think of beer. As every one knows, association gives a method of catching criminals. You are examining, let us say, a man whom you suspect of having cut his wife's throat with a knife. You say a word, and he is to say the first other word that comes into his head. You say 'cat' and he says 'Dog'; you say 'politician' and he says 'thief'; you say 'knife', and he has an impulse to say 'throat', but he knows he had better not, so after long hesitation he says 'fork'. The length of time shows his resistance.

So far, the matter is a commonplace. But some have thought that all mental processes could be explained by association, and that psychology could be made scientific by the use of this principle alone. This doctrine Bentham learnt from Hartley. Hume, who was a greater man than any of his British or French successors, had, before Hartley, done what seemed to him possible in the same direction. Hume thought of all the things that his followers thought of, showed what reason there was to think them true, and then proceeded to show that after all they were not quite true. This annoyed his followers, who wished to derive a dogma from scepticism; they therefore always gave Hume less credit than he deserved. What Hartley invented was not the principle of association, but its undue extension to cover all mental phenomena.

It should be observed that, on this question, the situation in psychology is unchanged since the time of Bentham, except for a variation of phraseology. Instead of the 'principle of association'

we now speak of the 'conditioned reflex', and we regard the effects of experience as operating primarily, not upon 'ideas', but upon muscles, glands, nerves, and brain. Pavlov has shown that the principle can do much, and Watson has asserted that it can do everything. But until he has explained why the word 'pepper' does not make you sneeze, his system must be regarded as uncompleted.

There is one important difference between associationism and behaviourism. The latter concerns, primarily, what is done by the body; the former concerned what was done by the mind. The associationists were inclined to deny the existence of matter, but not of mind. The poet, it is true, has said:

Stuart Mill both mind and matter
Ruthlessly would beat and batter,

but he was much less ruthless to mind than to matter. With the behaviourist, the opposite is the case: he believes in matter, but thinks mind an unnecessary hypothesis.

In so far as the principle of the conditioned reflex differs from that of the association of ideas, there has been a definite scientific advance. The new law covers all that was covered by the old, and a good deal more. It cannot be questioned that the old law was true over a certain field, nor that the new law is true over a wider field which includes the field of the old law. It is not the truth of either law, but its scope, that is legitimate matter of debate: some say that all mental phenomena are covered by it, while others maintain that there are kinds of thought of which the laws are different. This controversy remains substantially where it was a hundred and thirty years ago.

There is an important respect in which associationism and behaviourism have exactly similar consequences. Both are deterministic, that is to say, they think that what we do is governed by laws which are, at least in great part, ascertainable, so that our actions in given circumstances can be predicted by a good psychologist. So Bentham, one may suppose, said to himself: 'The criminal is the product of circumstances, and if certain circumstances have made him bad, there must be others which would make him good. I need only, therefore, invent the right kind of prison, and it will automatically turn thieves into honest men.' In like manner, the behaviourist thinks that the problem of producing virtuous children is merely one of creating the right

conditioned reflexes. In the laboratory, when the dog does what you want, you give him food; when he does the opposite, you give him an electric shock. The same method applied to children, we are assured, will soon turn them into models of good behaviour. I have not found due credit for this discovery given to Mr Wackford Squeers.

The 'greatest happiness principle' was the most famous formula of the Benthamite school. According to this principle, actions are good when they promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and bad when they do not. Why, in the passage quoted above, Bentham should have attributed this principle specially to Priestley, I do not know. As we have seen, it was stated almost exactly in Bentham's words by Hutcheson at a much earlier date, and in one form or another it had come to be accepted by most British and French philosophers. Priestley, as every one knows, was a Unitarian divine, a chemist, and a radical. He constructed a highly rationalized scheme of theology, he more or less discovered oxygen, and he stood by the French Revolution even in its worst days. On this account, the Birmingham mob wrecked his house, while he, very wisely, fled to America. He was a most praiseworthy citizen, but he had no special claim to be the inventor of the greatest happiness principle.

Between Bentham's ethics and his psychology there was something of a conflict. While a good act is one which furthers the general happiness, it is, according to him, a psychological law that every man pursues his own happiness. Since this is a thing which people cannot help doing, it would be mere waste of breath to blame them for it; it is, however, the business of the legislator to arrange that a man's private happiness shall be secured by acts that are in the public interest. This is the principle which inspires all Bentham's legal work.

There are, however, according to him, various reasons which make this artificial identification of private and public interests less frequently necessary than might have been supposed. As many previous writers had pointed out, there is sympathy, which makes the spectacle of another man's pain painful. But in addition to this, it will be found (so all the economists of that period contended), that, as a general rule, a man can best further the general interest by pursuing his own. This doctrine, which afforded the theoretical justification of *laissez faire*, arose, like some other very sober doctrines, out of a *jeu d'esprit*. Mande-

ville, in his *Fable of the Bees*, which appeared in 1723, developed, not too solemnly, his doctrine of 'private vices, public benefits', in which he maintained that it is by our selfishness that we promote the good of the community. Economists and moralists appropriated this doctrine, while explaining that Mandeville should not have spoken of 'private vices', since egoism could only be accounted a vice by those who had failed to grasp the true principles of psychology. Thus the doctrine of the natural harmony of interests, not as an absolute truth without exceptions, but as a broad general principle, came to be adopted by all the advocates of *laissez faire*. We shall see, later, how Ricardo unwittingly gave it its death-blow, and laid the foundations for the opposite doctrine of the class war.

The ethic based upon the greatest happiness principle, which came to be known as utilitarianism, was, when taken seriously, somewhat opposed to orthodox moral teaching. It is true that eminent divines, such as Bishop Butler, had adopted the principle, and that, until it became the watchword of the Radicals, no one found it objectionable. But any theory which judges the morality of an act by its consequences can only by a fortunate accident agree with the conventional view according to which certain classes of acts are sinful without regard to their effects. No doubt the precept 'Thou shalt not steal' is, in general, very sound, but it is easy to imagine circumstances in which a theft might further the general happiness. In a utilitarian system, all moral rules of the ordinary kind are liable to exceptions. Bentham was a free-thinker, and so were his leading disciples; it was therefore natural to accuse them of immoral teaching. There was, in fact, much less of such accusation than might have been expected, partly because the leaders of the school were cautious in propounding their doctrines, and partly because their private lives were singularly blameless. Although their teaching was fundamentally subversive, they continued to be regarded as on the whole respectable.

Bentham did not distinguish between pleasure and happiness, and resolutely refused to assign a qualitative superiority to what are called 'higher' pleasures. As he put it, 'quantity of pleasure being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry'. None the less, his doctrine was, in practice, almost ascetic. He held that self-approbation is the greatest of pleasures. Since men tend to value present pleasures more than pleasures in the future, the wise man will exercise prudence and self-restraint. On the whole, he

and his disciples sought happiness in hard work and an almost complete indifference to all pleasures of sense. This, no doubt, was a matter of temperament, not to be explained as a deduction from the doctrine; but the result was that their morality was quite as severe as that of their orthodox opponents.

CHAPTER TEN

James Mill

IT was chiefly through the instrumentality of James Mill that Bentham became a force in English politics, and a great deal of the personality of this hard-headed Scotchman passed into the character of British Radicalism. He was born in 1773, twenty-five years later than Bentham; his father was a small tradesman, and he owed his education to a patron, Sir John Stuart, who was struck by the boy's abilities. It was intended that he should become a minister, but by the time his education was finished he had ceased to believe in the Christian religion. He came to London in 1802, and must have been at that time by no means a Radical, since he contributed to the *Anti-Jacobin*. He lived by journalism, and spent his leisure in educating his son and writing a history of India. His history, begun in 1806, was published in 1818, and led to his being employed by the East India Company throughout the remainder of his life. From 1808 to 1818 he depended largely on Bentham's bounty. In the garden of Queen Square Place, where Bentham lived, there was a small house which had belonged to Milton; for a while, Bentham lent that house to James Mill, but later on he took another house, near his own, on purpose to let it to Mill for half what he himself paid for it. In the summer, if Bentham went away from London, Mill usually came with him.

Mill had become a Radical before he met Bentham; in psychology he was a disciple of Hartley, in economics he accepted Malthus and was a close friend of Ricardo, in politics he was an extreme democrat and a doctrinaire believer in *laissez faire*. He was not an original thinker, but he was clear and vigorous, and had the unquestioning faith of the born disciple, with the disciple's utter contempt for doctrines at variance with the Master's. 'I see clearly enough what poor Kant is about,' he wrote, after a brief attempt to read that philosopher. Like all his kind, he greatly admired Helvetius, from whom he accepted the current doctrine of the omnipotence of education. His eldest son, John

Stuart, born in the year in which he began his history of India, afforded suitable material for exemplifying the truth of Helvetius's theories. The victim's autobiography, one of the most interesting books ever written, tells the result, and incidentally reveals the character of James Mill.

His capacity for work must have been amazing. He would spend the day at his desk writing his History, while his son John, in the same room, was learning his lesson, with the right of asking for explanations whenever it might be necessary. The whole of John's education was conducted by his father. He began Greek, he tells us, at the age of three, 'committing to memory what my father termed vocables, being lists of common Greek words, with their signification in English, which he wrote out for me on cards.' He did not begin Latin until he was seven. In the same year he read six of Plato's dialogues, but did not fully understand the *Theaetetus*. He learned arithmetic at the same time; also an incredible amount of history. 'When I came to the American war, I took my part, like a child as I was (until set right by my father) on the wrong side, because it was called the English side.' For amusement, he had such books as *Anson's Voyages*. 'Of children's books, any more than of playthings, I had scarcely any, except an occasional gift from a relation or acquaintance: among those I had, *Robinson Crusoe* was pre-eminent, and continued to delight me all through my boyhood. It was no part, however, of my father's system to exclude books of amusement, though he allowed them very sparingly.'

From his eighth year onwards, John had not only to learn, but also to teach his younger brothers and sisters, who were numerous. Apart from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, all the best Latin authors, a great deal of history, and a minute study of Roman Government, he had not time for much learning after instructing the younger members of the family; he seems to have mastered little else, before the age of twelve, except algebra and geometry, the differential calculus, and several other branches of higher mathematics.

It must not be supposed that John got no fun out of life. 'During this part of my childhood,' he says, 'one of my greatest amusements was experimental science; in the theoretical, however, not the practical sense of the word, not trying experiments—a kind of discipline which I have often regretted not having had—not even seeing, but only reading about them.'

At twelve years old he began logic, reading all that Aristotle had to say on the subject, several of the schoolmen, and Hobbes. In his times of recreation he used to walk with his father on Bagshot Heath, being instructed that he must not think the syllogistic logic silly, and taught how to reduce arguments to correct syllogistic form.

It was towards the end of John's thirteenth year that his father began to be employed by the East India Company, but John's education continued as before; in this very year, his father taught him all political economy.

At fourteen, the boy was considered to have reached a point where he ought to see something of the world, and he was sent abroad for over a year. Before he left the parental roof, his father, like Polonius on a similar occasion, gave him some good advice. The *exact* words are not recorded, but they appear to have been roughly as follows :

'John: until this moment, mindful of the fact that over-estimation of one's own merits is a grievous defect, I have carefully concealed from you the extent to which your intellectual attainments surpass those of most boys of your age. Now, however, in view of the year of foreign travel which I have decided to be for your welfare, you are certain to learn this fact from others, if not from me; some may even be so thoughtless as to pay you compliments, and suggest to your mind the erroneous belief that you possess exceptional abilities. In fact, whatever you know more than others cannot be ascribed to any merit in you, but to the very unusual advantage which has fallen your lot, of having a father able to teach you, and willing to give the necessary trouble and time. That you know more than less fortunate boys, is no matter of praise; it would be a disgrace if you did not.'

James Mill was passionately anti-Christian, and maintained that the orthodox God, if He existed, would be a Being of infinite cruelty. He seems, however, to have been unable wholly to divest himself in his dealings with his son, of some of the God-like attributes of which he disapproved. John, who criticizes him with reluctance, says that he showed insufficient tenderness to his children. He adds immediately that he believes his father to have *felt* tenderness, but to have concealed it from reserve and dislike of emotional display; this, however, the reader feels inclined to doubt. John confesses that he himself had no affection for his father, since 'fear of him was drying it up at its source'.

He adds that this must have been a grief to his father, and that the younger children, who had had John for their tutor, loved their father tenderly. Perhaps.

John, in later life, was perpetually discovering reasons for disagreeing with his father, but hesitating to take the step to actual disagreement; in his books, his father's ghost seems to stand over him whenever he is tempted to feel sentiment, saying: 'Now, John, no weakness.' James Mill was a good man; he worked hard, and devoted himself to public objects. But he ought not to have been let loose among children.

John's account of his father's outlook on life is interesting, the more so as James Mill, more exactly than any other individual, typified the whole Benthamite school in this respect.

In his views of life he partook of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Cynic, not in the modern but the ancient sense of the word. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated. His standard of morals was Epicurean, inasmuch as it was utilitarian, taking as the exclusive test of right and wrong, the tendency of actions to produce pleasure or pain. But he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure; at least in his later years, of which alone, on this point, I can speak confidently. He was not insensible to pleasures; but he deemed very few of them worth the price which, at least in the present state of society, must be paid for them. The greater number of miscarriages in life, he considered to be attributable to the over-valuing of pleasures. Accordingly, temperance, in the large sense intended by the Greek philosophers—stopping short at the point of moderation in all indulgences—was with him, as with them, almost the central point of educational precept. His inculcations of this virtue fill a large place in my childish remembrances. He thought human life a poor thing at best, after the freshness of youth and of unsatisfied curiosity had gone by. This was a topic on which he did not often speak, especially, it may be supposed, in the presence of young persons: but when he did, it was with an air of settled and profound conviction. He would sometimes say, that if life were made what it might be, by good government and good education, it would be worth having: but he never spoke with anything like enthusiasm even of that possibility. He never varied in rating intellectual enjoyments above all others, even in value as pleasures, independently of their ulterior benefits. The pleasures of the benevolent affections

he placed high in the scale; and used to say, that he had never known a happy old man, except those who were able to live over again in the pleasures of the young. For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness. 'The intense' was with him a bye-word of scornful disapprobation. He regarded as an aberration of the moral standard of modern times, compared with that of the ancients, the great stress laid upon feeling.

The intellectual conviction that pleasure is the sole good, together with a temperamental incapacity for experiencing it, was characteristic of Utilitarians. From the point of view of the calculus of pleasures and pains, their emotional poverty was advantageous: they tended to think that pleasure could be measured by bank-account, and pain by fines or terms of imprisonment. Unselfish and stoical devotion to the doctrine that every man seeks only his own pleasure is a curious psychological paradox. Something not dissimilar was to be found in Lenin and his most sincere followers. Lenin held, apparently, that the good consists in abundance of material commodities; he was very scornful of all appeals to altruism, and believed, as firmly as the Benthamites, that economic self-interest governs men's economic activities. On behalf of this creed, he endured persecution, exile and poverty; when he rose to be the head of a great State he lived with Spartan simplicity; and from worship of material prosperity he plunged his country into many years of abysmal poverty. The Benthamites were not called upon for such heroic action, but their mentality is closely similar.

James Mill was a democrat, not because he felt himself down-trodden (for who would have dared to down-tread such a man?), nor yet from generous sympathy, with which nature had not endowed him in any large measure. He was a democrat, so far as can be judged, from a rational application of the felicific calculus. If you have a shilling to distribute among twelve children, you will, other things being equal, cause most happiness by giving them each a penny. If you gave a shilling to one, and nothing to the other eleven, the one would get ill from a surfeit of sweets, and the other eleven would be filled with envious rage. This, so far as it goes, is an argument for communism, but communism was vehemently opposed by all the Benthamites, because they

considered competition a necessary spur to activity. No such argument applied to the distribution of political power. In view of the universal egoism, no man's interests could safely be entrusted to another, so that any class destitute of political power was sure to suffer injustice. Moreover, if the spur to useful activity is competition, all men should be exposed to it, and unjust privileges should be abolished. These arguments were such as Bentham could understand; combined with the failure of the *Panopticon*, they decided him to abandon Toryism and become a democrat.

The utilitarians were unusually rational men, and had a firm belief in the rationality of the mass of mankind. 'Every man possessed of reason,' says James Mill, 'is accustomed to weigh evidence, and to be guided and determined by its preponderance. When various conclusions are, with their evidence, presented with equal care and with equal skill, there is a moral certainty, though some few may be misguided, that the greater number will judge right, and that the greatest force of evidence, wherever it is, will produce the greatest impression.' There is a happy innocence about this confession of faith; it belongs to the age before Freud and before the growth of the art of propaganda. Oddly enough, in Mill's day his confidence was justified by the event. The Benthamites, who were learned men and authors of difficult books, aimed solely at appealing to men's reason, and yet they were successful; in almost all important respects, the course of British politics down to 1874 was such as they advocated. In the Victorian era, this victory of reason surprised no one; in our more lunatic period, it reads like the myth of a Golden Age.

Bentham, as soon as he had accepted the argument for democracy, became more democratic than any of his school. He regarded the monarchy and the House of Lords as undesirable institutions, although, on this point, no one ventured publicly to agree with him. He failed even to find any argument against votes for women; on the contrary, he advanced many excellent arguments in favour, though without reaching a definite conclusion in print. He seems privately to have been rather favourable than unfavourable, for John Stuart Mill says, in giving an account of the opinions of the group of young men whom he influenced: 'Every reason which exists for giving the suffrage to anybody, demands that it should not be withheld from women. This was also the general opinion of the younger proselytes; and

it is pleasant to be able to say that Mr Bentham, on this important point, was wholly on our side.' With Mr Bentham, however, this opinion remained academic; it was left to John Stuart Mill, in later life, to bring the question to the notice of Parliament as one of practical importance.

James Mill has a two-fold importance in the Benthamite movement. In the first place, he fashioned his son John as Hamilcar fashioned Hannibal. John, by his amiable and kindly disposition, was not designed by nature for such stern doctrine as that of the Philosophical Radicals; indeed, in later life he softened it at various points. But he retained the belief that his father's teaching was sound in the main, and this gave him a greater influence than he could have had if he had had to rely upon confidence in himself.

In the second place, James Mill, by his capacity for discipleship, combined a number of separate eminent men into a single school, and thereby immensely increased their collective influence. Most Radicals, not unnaturally, looked upon Malthus and his theory with suspicion; James Mill accepted the theory, and gave it a new twist. He and his friend Francis Place, the Radical tailor, were not affected by Malthus's clerical scruples, and therefore deduced, from his economic doctrine, the desirability of artificial checks to conception. What is called neo-Malthusianism begins with them. From them it spread, slowly and in spite of persecution, until, in our own day, it has put an end to the increase of population in the most civilized countries.

It was in the year 1812, through the instrumentality of James Mill, that Place was introduced to Bentham, who was thus brought into contact with a social layer and a kind of politics of which he had previously known little. Place treated Bentham with affectionate respect, addressing him in letters as 'My dear old Father'. Of Bentham's letters to Place, one, quoted by Graham Wallas in his *Life of Francis Place*, may serve as a sample. It concerns the precautions which Bentham took to conceal his hostility to Christianity and his belief (probably as a result of Place's persuasion) in neo-Malthusianism. The word 'juggical', which occurs in it, means 'Christian'. It is derived from 'Juggernaut', which was used in that set to mean 'Christianity,' so that the subject could be mentioned before servants without giving occasion for scandal. The letter is as follows:

Queen's Square Place,
April 24, 1831, Sunday.

Dear Good Boy,

I have made an appointment for you; and you must absolutely keep it, or make another. It is to see Prentice, and hear him express his regrets for calling you a 'bold bad man.' (Oh, but the appointment it is for Tuesday, one o'clock, commencement of my circumgiration time.) I said you were a *bold* man, but denied your being a *bad* one, judging from near twenty years' intimacy. I asked him why he called you a *bad* man; his answer was because of the pains you had taken to disseminate your anti-over-population (I should have said your over-population-stopping) expedient. The case is, he is juggical; Calvinistic; is descended from two parsonical grandfathers of considerable notoriety. I observed to him that every man is master of his own actions, but no man of his own opinions; that on the point in question he was no less far from you than you from him; and that if every man were to quarrel with every man whose opinions did not on every point whatsoever coincide with his, the earth would not be long burdened with the human race. As to the point in question, I took care not to let him know how my opinion stood; the fat would have been all in the fire, unless I succeeded in converting him, for which there was no time; all I gave him to understand on the score of religion as to my own sentiments was, that I was for universal toleration; and on one or two occasions I quoted scripture. . . .

James Mill brought together Bentham and Malthus and Ricardo and the lower-middle-class Radicalism of Francis Place, who, in turn, was closely associated with the upper-class Radicalism of Sir Francis Burdett. The doctrine of Hartley and Helvetius, with such parts of Hume as could be fitted into a doctrinaire orthodoxy, gave the intellectual respectability of a philosophical basis to the excitement of the mob in the Westminster elections. In all this, James Mill's function was that of mortar, by which the separate bricks were combined into an edifice. It was a strange edifice, containing materials which no one could have expected to see in combination. Most Radical movements have been inspired either by sentiments of sympathy for the oppressed, or by hatred of oppressors. In James Mill's Radicalism, neither of these is prominent. He felt, undoubtedly, a universal benevolence, which appears, for example, in his opposition to what he

regarded as cruel in theological orthodoxy. This emotion, however, was not very intense, and would have been pushed aside by stronger passions in any man of more intense feeling. In James Mill, benevolence supplied the emotional stimulus, but remained in the background, and at no point overpowered reason. He accepted without difficulty opinions according to which much suffering is inevitable; where those opinions were sound, this was a strength, but where they were false, a weakness. This strength and weakness characterized the Benthamite school throughout its history.

Ricardo

RICARDO, unlike James Mill, is important through his doctrine alone, not through his personality. He was, by all accounts, a lovable man; John Stuart Mill alludes to him repeatedly as 'my father's dearest friend,' and says that 'by his benevolent countenance, and kindness of manner, [he] was very attractive to young persons.' He entered Parliament in 1818, and was listened to with respect, but his influence was as a writer. His chief work was *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, published in 1817. This book became, in a sense, the canon of economic orthodoxy; at the same time, it was found that the devil could quote scripture: both Socialists and Single-Taxers derived their proposals from his doctrines. The Socialists appealed to his theory of value, the Single-Taxers to his theory of rent. More generally, by discussing the distribution of wealth among the different classes of society, he incidentally made it clear that different classes may have divergent interests. There is much in Marx that is derived from Ricardo. He has thus a two-fold importance: as the source of official economics, and also as the unintentional parent of heresy.

Ricardo's theory of rent is simple, and in suitable circumstances perfectly valid. In considering it, let us, to begin with, confine ourselves to agricultural land. Some land is more fertile, some less; at any given moment, there must be some land on the margin of cultivation, which is only just worth cultivating. That is to say, it just yields a return to the farmer's capital which is equal to what the same capital would yield if otherwise invested. If the landlord were to demand rent for this land, the farmer would no longer find it worth cultivating; such land, therefore, will yield no rent to the landlord. On more fertile land, on the contrary, a given amount of capital yields more than the usual rate of profit; therefore the farmer is willing to pay the landlord for the right to cultivate it. What he is willing to pay is the excess of the produce above what is yielded by the same

amount of the worst land in cultivation. Thus the rent of an acre of land is the amount by which the value of the crop that can be raised on it exceeds the value of the crop that can be raised on an acre of the worst land in cultivation.

What applies to agricultural land applies equally to all land. A piece of land in the centre of a big town can be used for such purposes as shops or offices, out of which an immense income can be made. Part of this income is interest on capital, in the shape of buildings, etc.; part is profits of business enterprise; but there is a further part, which goes to the owner of the land in the shape of ground-rent. Anything that increases the size of the town, and therefore the income to be made by a shop or office at its centre, increases the rent that the land-owner can exact for the right of using the site. It must be understood, of course, that the theory is concerned only with ground-rent, not with that part of the rent which is due to the value of the buildings erected on the site.

In the circumstances of England while the Corn Laws were in force, Ricardo's theory of rent had great practical importance. If it had been possible to import grain, the worst agricultural land in England would have gone out of cultivation. Consequently the difference between the best land and the worst that would have remained in cultivation would have diminished, and rents would have fallen. So much was, of course, obvious to the land-owners, who controlled Parliament.

There were, however, further consequences, which were connected with Adam Smith's arguments in favour of free trade. If the importation of grain were to occur as a result of abolishing the import duty, the capital now employed on the worst land would flow into industry, where it would make the exports required to pay for the imported grain. This new employment of capital would necessarily be more profitable than the old, since, if not, it would not pay to import grain instead of producing it at home. There would, therefore, be an increase of the national wealth accompanied by a fall in rents; there would be more to divide, and of the increased total an increased proportion would go to the industrious classes. This perfectly sound argument naturally appealed to manufacturers, but not to landowners. It was only after the Reform Bill had transferred political power to the middle class that the free-traders could obtain control of Parliament. When, in 1846, free trade in corn was introduced, its consequences were found to be such as the economists had predicted.

Ricardo's theory of rent reflects accurately the conflict between middle class manufacturers and upper class landowners which dominated English politics from 1815 to 1846. But it was possible to make a much more radical application of the theory than any contemplated by Ricardo or the Manchester men. These men were rich, but wished to be richer; they were the industrious rich, and were not willing to accept a position inferior to that of the idle rich. But they were by no means revolutionaries; they wished the world to remain one in which wealth could be enjoyed. Moreover they had a rooted distrust of the State, owing, no doubt, to the fact that they did not control it. For these reasons, they did not advance from Ricardo to Henry George and the doctrine of the single tax. Yet that is a perfectly logical consequence. Economic rent is not paid to the landowner in return for any service that he performs; it is paid merely for permission to produce wealth on his land. By the labour of others he is enriched, while he need not lift a finger; his economic function is merely to receive rent, without in any way adding to the national wealth. It is no very difficult inference that the private ownership of land should be abolished, and all rent paid to the State. This inference, however, was not drawn, or even considered, by Ricardo.

Ricardo's theory of value, while less true than his theory of rent, has had even more influence. The question of value arises in economics as follows: Suppose you have one pound to spend, you can obtain for it a certain quantity of wheat, or of beer, or of tobacco, or of pins, or of books, or what not. If a certain quantity of wheat and a certain number of pins both cost one pound, they have the same 'value.' What determines how many pins will have the same value as a given amount of wheat? Ricardo answered: They will have the same value if the same amount of labour has been required to produce them. The value of any commodity, he says, is measured by the work involved in making it.

Up to a point, this doctrine is true. If you are a carpenter, and it takes you twice as long to make a table as to make a chair, you will naturally charge twice as much—apart from the cost of the wood. Different manufactured articles made by men who are all paid the same rate of wages will have a price proportional to the labour that has gone into them—again apart from the cost of the raw material. Ricardo's theory of value, one may say, is approximately true, under conditions of free com-

petition, whenever the value of the commodity is mainly dependent upon the process of manufacture as opposed to the natural fertility of the earth.

But it is easy to see that the theory cannot be wholly correct, if only because it conflicts with Ricardo's own theory of rent. Two bushels of wheat of the same quality are of the same value wherever they have been produced; but a bushel of wheat costs less labour to produce on good land than on poor land. This is the basis of Ricardo's theory of rent, and should have made him see that his theory of value could not be right. There are, of course, more extreme examples. In the early days of a new goldfield, it has sometimes happened that a man has picked up by accident a huge nugget worth as much as £10,000. The value of his labour, at an ordinary rate of wages, would have been about half a crown, but his gold was worth just as much as if he had had to work for it.

I do not wish to weary the reader with the niceties of the theory of value, but the subject proved of such immense importance in the development of Socialism that some discussion of it is unavoidable. In certain cases, Ricardo's theory is quite right, while in certain others it is quite wrong; in the commonest kind of case, it is more or less right, but not wholly. The question turns on the part played by monopoly in the particular case concerned.

Let us take first some instance in which, apart from the rent of land, monopoly plays almost no part—say the manufacture of cotton cloth as it was in Ricardo's day. This was probably the sort of commodity that he had in mind. There were many manufacturers, all keenly competing against each other; the raw material was produced under fairly uniform conditions, and sold by the growers competitively. The labour involved in making the necessary machinery was, of course, part of the labour involved in making the cloth; here, also, there was in that day a plentiful supply of iron ore, belonging to many different mines which were in no way combined, and there were also, as time went on, many firms making textile machinery. There was one element of monopoly, it is true, namely that due to the existence of patents: these represent, in theory, the monopoly value of the inventor's skill. Royalties to inventors formed, however, a very small part of the cost of a given piece of cotton cloth. On the whole, the price would be determined pretty accurately by the amount of labour involved in making it.

Now let us take something at the opposite extreme, say a picture by Leonardo. There was presumably no more labour in it than in some daub that could be bought for five shillings, and yet it may be worth fifty thousand pounds. This is a case of pure monopoly: the supply cannot be increased, and therefore the price depends only upon the demand. The earnings of persons who have a complete or partial monopoly of some kind of skill come under this head; I am thinking of such persons as opera-singers, eminent surgeons and barristers, film stars, and so on.

Most cases are intermediate between these two extremes. In general, the raw material of an industry is either agricultural or mineral. If it is agricultural, the law of rent, as we saw already, modifies Ricardo's law of value: it is the labour cost on the worst land under cultivation, not on average land, that determines value. In the case of minerals, if there are many independent sources of supply, exactly the same reasoning applies as in the case of agricultural produce; but not infrequently there is a combination among the owners of the sources of supply, so that the value of the raw material is determined by the rules governing monopolies. In the later stages, also, monopoly, partial or complete, has been more and more replacing competition. This comes partly through the formation of Trusts, partly through patents, partly through ownership of raw materials.

Where there is monopoly with power to increase supply, the producer has to consider whether it will pay him better to dispose of large quantities at low prices, or of small quantities at high prices. It is obvious that the more he charges the less he will sell, and that there is some price which gives him the maximum profit. But this has nothing to do with cost of production, except that cost of production sets a minimum, below which the producer cannot profitably let the price fall.

Ricardo's theory that value is determined by the amount of labour involved in production is therefore far from being quite true, and has become less true since his time, owing to the diminution of competition. He himself was partially aware of its limitations, but James Mill and McCulloch seized on it with the zeal of disciples, and refused to admit even the qualifications which Ricardo thought necessary. Orthodox economics thus accepted the theory in an almost unqualified form until a better theory, giving due place to the importance of demand, was invented by Jevons at a much later date.

Ricardo's theory of value, not unnaturally, was welcomed by the champions of labour, and put by them to uses which he had not foreseen. If the whole value of a commodity is due to the labour which has gone into producing it, why, they asked, should not the whole value be paid to the men who have made the commodity? With what right did the landlord and the capitalist appropriate part of the products, if they had added nothing to its value? Economists associated with working-class movements, notably Thomas Hodgskin and William Thompson, basing themselves on Ricardo, argued that no one should receive money except in return for labour, and that the labourer had a right to the whole produce of his own work. These men, as we shall see later, became influential in the Socialist movement connected with Robert Owen. At a later stage, they influenced Marx, who also based his argument on Ricardo's theory of value. At the present day, while Ricardo's influence is much diminished in orthodox economics, it lives on in the economics of the Marxists, who, in this respect as in some others, preserve an outlook belonging to the early nineteenth century.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Benthamite Doctrine

As a result of the combined teaching of Malthus, Bentham, and Ricardo, a body of doctrine grew up, which was accepted by a gradually increasing number of progressive people, both in the middle class and among working men—though among the latter, as we shall see, there were rival schools which also had influence. The views accepted by the followers of the Benthamites were, in some respects, more crude than those of the leaders, but in *other* respects less so. It is worth while to consider what the doctrine became in the minds of its popularizers, since it was through them that it influenced legislation.

The views of the Philosophical Radicals fall naturally under three heads, economic, political, and moral, and of these three the economic was, in their case, the most important.

The economics of the school were dominated by Malthus. Until such time as the working classes could be induced to practise moral restraint, the principle of population made it inevitable that the wages of unskilled labour should barely suffice to enable a man to live and rear a family. Where women and children earned wages, the man's wages would only need to suffice for his own support. There might be moments in the world's history, after a destructive war or a very terrible epidemic, when wages would temporarily rise above subsistence level, but the result would be a diminution of infant mortality until the population, through increasing numbers, returned to its previous low level. There was, therefore, no point in the schemes of well-meaning philanthropists, nor yet in relief by the medium of the Poor Law. Working men who tried to raise wages by means of strikes and trade unions were utterly misguided. Communists, who aimed at economic equality, might drag the rich down, but could not improve the position of the poor, since increase of population would quickly destroy any momentary amelioration.

There was one hope for the working classes, and only one, namely that, from prudence, they would learn to control their procreative instincts. Middle-class Radicals, with a few exceptions, urged that they should do this by 'moral restraint'; Place, an ardent Malthusian who yet remembered his working-class origin, urged less painful methods. Meanwhile, the whole school were excused by their doctrines from all participation in humanitarian efforts to diminish the sufferings of the wage-earning classes by what seemed to them superficial methods.

The landlords, at the other end of the social scale, equally had to be kept in their place. Ricardo's theory of rent showed that, in the long run, the whole benefit of the corn laws went to the landlords; the farmers were deprived, by higher rents, of whatever benefit might otherwise have come to them. The wage-earners neither gained nor lost, since in any case they would be on the verge of starvation. But the industrial employers lost, because, when bread was dear, they had to pay higher wages to prevent their labourers from dying of hunger. Therefore, for the sake of the factory owners, the import duty on corn ought to be abolished.

Profits represented what was left after paying rent and wages. Therefore the way to increase profits was to lower rent and wages. Wages could only be lowered by making bread cheaper, i.e. by free trade in corn; the same measure, by allowing the worst lands to go out of cultivation, would lower rents, and would, therefore, be doubly advantageous to the class that lived on profits, as opposed to rent and wages. The Benthamites represented this class; they were the first to adopt the modern creed of industrialism and mechanization.

Politically, the creed of the school contained three main articles: *laissez faire*, democracy, and education. *Laissez faire*, as a principle, was invented in France during the *ancien régime*, but it disappeared during the Revolution, and Napoleon had no use for it. In the England of 1815, however, the same conditions existed which had produced it in the France of Louis XVI: an energetic and intelligent middle class politically controlled by a stupid government. There might conceivably be beneficial forms of State control, but the existing State was much more likely to adopt harmful forms. The new men, conscious that they wielded a new power and were creating a new world, asked only to be let alone.

So far, there was much to be said for *laissez faire*, but it

became a dogma and was carried to ridiculous extremes. The *Economist*, a periodical which represented the views of the Benthamites, even objected to the Public Health Act of 1848, which was passed as the result of a Commission revealing the most appallingly insanitary conditions in most of the big towns. While the Bill was before the House of Commons, the *Economist* regretted that it was not being more vigorously opposed. 'Suffering and evil,' the editor wrote, 'are nature's admonitions; they cannot be got rid of; and the impatient attempts of benevolence to banish them from the world by legislation, before benevolence has learned their object and their end, have always been productive of more evil than good.'¹ The 'benevolence' of Parliament was proof against these arguments for not constructing a proper drainage system, because epidemics due to its absence were raging within a stone's throw of the House of Commons. Most of the Philosophical Radicals were opposed to factory legislation, even where the case for it was most indubitable. When, in 1847, the Bill prohibiting children from working more than ten hours a day in cotton factories was passed by both Houses, the *Economist*'s head-line was 'The Lords leagued with the Commons to prohibit Industry.' The principle, the paper said, was the same as in the case of the Corn Law—in each an unwarrantable interference for the sake of one class.²

Democracy, which was advocated whole-heartedly by James Mill and (in later life) by Bentham, was accepted with some limitations by most of the school. The importance of property had a large place in their minds, and they did not welcome the idea of great numbers of voters who owned nothing. They all wanted something more far-reaching than the Reform Act of 1832, but few wanted manhood suffrage, and only a handful wanted votes for women. The advocacy of manhood suffrage was taken up by the Chartist, who were working class and less respectable than the Benthamites. Nevertheless, the Benthamites always urged as much extension of the suffrage as was at all within the sphere of practical politics; they were, therefore, quite as effective in furthering democracy as they would have been if their demands had been more extreme.

Belief in democracy was bound up with belief in the power of reason over men's minds, provided they were sufficiently edu-

¹ Clapham, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 545.

² *Ibid.*, p. 577.

cated to be able to follow an argument. James Mill, his son says, had

an almost unbounded confidence in the efficacy of two things: representative government, and complete freedom of discussion. So complete was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind, whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to them by word and in writing, and if by means of the suffrage they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted. He thought that when the legislature no longer represented a class interest, it would aim at the general interest, honestly and with adequate wisdom; since the people would be sufficiently under the guidance of educated intelligence, to make in general a good choice of persons to represent them, and having done so, to leave to those whom they had chosen a liberal discretion. Accordingly aristocratic rule, the government of the Few in any of its shapes, being in his eyes the only thing which stood between mankind and an administration of their affairs by the best wisdom to be found among them, was the object of his sternest disapprobation, and a democratic suffrage the principal article of his political creed, not on the ground of liberty, Rights of Man, or any of the phrases, more or less significant, by which, up to that time, democracy had usually been defended, but as the most essential of 'securities for good government.' In this, too, he held fast only to what he deemed essentials; he was comparatively indifferent to monarchical or republican forms—far more so than Bentham, to whom a king, in the character of 'corrupter-general,' appeared necessarily very noxious.

'All would be gained if the whole population were taught to read.' James Mill imagined the working man coming home in the evening and reading Hume or Hartley or Bentham; he did not foresee the literature that would be provided for a population that had learnt to read, but had been taught almost nothing else. The kind of working man that he imagined does exist, but he is not common, and no one less ascetic than the early Benthamites would have expected him ever to become common. With such expectations, however, it was natural to feel a great desire for the spread of education. All the Benthamites took

a considerable part in the movements of the time for providing working-class schools. Universal compulsory education did not come in England till 1870, but it would not have come then but for the Philosophical Radicals.

The opposition to popular education at that time was amazingly strong, even in quarters in which it might not have been expected. In the year 1807, a Bill to provide elementary schools throughout England was introduced by Whitbread. It was defeated in the Lords, at the instance of Eldon and the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is quite in order, but it is curious to find that it was vehemently opposed by the President of the Royal Society. 'However specious in theory the project might be (so he said), of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would in effect be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture, and other laborious employments to which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them fractious and refractory, as was evident in the manufacturing counties; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and in a few years the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrate with much more vigorous laws than were now in force.'¹

In spite of these grave warnings, the nonconformists proceeded to found schools, and the Church, for fear of losing its hold on the young, was compelled to follow suit. In the nonconformist movement the Benthamites were active.

The reader may remember that Dr Folliott, as quoted in the motto to this section, objected to sixpenny tracts on hydrostatics, the Steam Intellect Society, and the learned friend. Whether sixpenny tracts on hydrostatics existed, I doubt; but the learned friend was Brougham, and the Steam Intellect Society was the 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge,' of which Brougham was chairman and Lord John Russell vice-chairman. Brougham, if not a complete Benthamite, was very closely allied with those who were; James Mill, according to his son, 'was the good genius by the side of Brougham in most of what he did for the public, either on education, law reform, or

¹ Hammond, *Town Labourer* (1932 ed.), p. 57.

any other subject.' Much useful knowledge was diffused by the society in question, in spite of the hostility of Dr Folliott and the President of the Royal Society. Nevertheless, the prejudice against popular education dies hard. When, in 1853, my grandfather established a school in the village of Petersham (where he lived), the gentry complained that 'he had destroyed the hitherto aristocratic character of the neighbourhood.' Nor is the prejudice extinct even now.

There is one other point in Benthamite politics that is important, and that is hostility to imperialism. Bentham, even in his Tory days, saw no use in over-seas possessions. At the height of the French Revolution he wrote, and presented to Talleyrand, a work called: *Emancipate your Colonies! addressed to the National Convention of France, Anno 1793. Shewing the uselessness and mischievousness of distant dependencies to an European State.* This was not merely an opinion for the French; he held the same views as regards British colonies. He converted his friend Lord Lansdowne, who stated in the House of Lords in 1797: 'A greater good could not be done to Spain, than to relieve them from the curse of these settlements [Spanish America], and make them an industrious people like their neighbours. A greater evil could not happen to England than to add them to our already overgrown possessions.' Bentham's later disciples on the whole retained his view on this subject. As believers in free trade, they saw no economic benefit in sovereignty, and they were incapable of the sentiment of imperial pride. In the eighteenth century, the Whigs were more imperialistic than the Tories; in the nineteenth, under the influence of the Benthamites, the most typical Liberals were Little Englanders. In this respect, however, national pride proved too strong for philosophy. In the very hey-day of Benthamism, Palmerston was the idol of the Liberal party, partly because he cared more for British prestige than for any theories under the sun.

It must also be admitted that there was one respect in which even Bentham was seduced from his austere cosmopolitanism. After James Mill had come to be employed by the East India Company, both he and Bentham felt that a promising field had been opened to experimentation. Bentham hoped to inspire an Indian legal code: 'I shall be the dead legislative of British India. Twenty years after I am dead, I shall be a despot.' After quoting this remark, Halévy adds: 'Twenty-eight years after his

death the Indian penal code came into force; it had been drawn up by Macaulay under the influence of Bentham's and James Mill's ideas, so that Bentham, who had failed to give a legal code to England, did actually become the posthumous legislator of the vastest of her possessions.¹

The moral outlook of the Benthamites was somewhat singular. Intellectually, they were emancipated; in theory, they lived for pleasure; in economics, they held that a sane man will pursue his pecuniary self-interest. Politically, they advocated great changes, but without heat, without enthusiasm, without visible generosity of sentiment even when they went against their own interest and that of their class; some of them, and notably Bentham, showed a rare indifference to pecuniary self-interest, and a readiness to sacrifice large sums to friendship or a public object; as for pleasure, one feels that they had read of it in books, and supposed it must be a good thing, but that in their lives they knew nothing of it; and their intellectual emancipation never passed over into any action contrary to the received moral code—except, perhaps, in James Mill's rather timid advocacy of neo-Malthusianism, and Place's rather bolder propaganda in the same direction. With the exception of Place, they were all ‘bookish’ men; the action in which their impulse to activity found its most natural outlet was that of writing. There was no rough-and-tumble in their lives; none of them would have known what to do with a horse-dealer or a card-sharper or even an ordinary drunkard.

The morals of James Mill as described by his son are typical of the sect:

In ethics, his moral feelings were energetic and rigid on all points which he deemed important to human well being, while he was supremely indifferent in opinion (though his indifference did not show itself in personal conduct) to all those doctrines of the common morality, which he thought had no foundation but in asceticism and priestcraft. He looked forward, for example, to a considerable increase of freedom in the relations between the sexes, though without pretending to define exactly what would be, or ought to be, the precise conditions of that freedom. This opinion was connected in him with no sensuality either of a theoretical or of a practical kind. He anticipated, on the contrary, as one of the beneficial effects of increased freedom, that

¹ Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, p. 510.

the imagination would no longer dwell upon the physical relation and its adjuncts, and swell this into one of the principal objects of life; a perversion of the imagination and feelings, which he regarded as one of the deepest seated and most pernicious evils in the human mind.

In fact, he regarded sex much as I regard football. I have no wish to forbid people to watch football matches, but I cannot imagine why they do it, and I hope in time they will grow too sensible to wish to do so. If I lived in a country where football was thought wicked, and where the game was played in secret while every one pretended that it was unknown, I might be driven to champion the cause of the oppressed footballer, but without much enthusiasm. This represents the attitude of these highly refined hedonists on matters of sexual morality.

The virtue which, in practice, they prized above all others, was prudence. For this there were many reasons. One was Malthus: to marry young and have a large family was the cardinal crime, and only prudence could lead men to avoid it. Another was the fact that, for those who had even a little capital, profitable investment was easy, while for those who had none life was very hard. Another, which affected all shades of opinion, was fear of the French Revolution, and the feeling that such events could only be prevented by keeping a tight hold over the emotions and passions.

The Utilitarians had another virtue, closely allied to prudence, namely intellectual sobriety. They reasoned carefully on every subject of which they treated; they never imagined that they knew things by the light of nature; they were seldom misled by emotion; and although they were systematic, love of system hardly ever led them into errors which they would not have committed in any case. Much of this intellectual sobriety descends to them from Locke. There is in his *Essay on the Human Understanding* a critical chapter headed 'Of enthusiasm,' which is directed against Cromwellian sectaries. Intellectually, though not politically, the Methodists occupied a similar position in the time of the Utilitarians. The Methodists knew all about the next world, which they regarded as more important than our life here on earth. The Benthamites knew nothing of such matters: they were not atheists, but what came to be called agnostics. Where there was no evidence, they suspended judgment—a practice as admirable as it is rare.

The Utilitarians were, and still are, made fun of for the supposed habit of judging all things by their usefulness rather than by any quality they may possess on their own account. 'A Utilitarian says, What is the use of a nightingale, unless roasted? What profit is there in the fragrance of a rose, unless you can distil from it an otto at ten shillings a drop? What can you mint out of the red flush of a morning cloud, save a shepherd's warning, to take his waterproof with him when going out in the world?'¹ It must be admitted that the temperament of the early Utilitarians gave some colour to this accusation, but I think it results much more from the suggestions of the word. Certainly there was nothing in the doctrine of the school to warrant this common criticism. The doctrine was that pleasure is the good. If you derived more pleasure from hearing the nightingale than from eating it, you would abstain from roasting it. If you and the nightingale, jointly, would enjoy a greater sum of pleasure if he were left to sing than if he were eaten, the legislator would arrange the laws so that you should not kill the bird. This was the doctrine; and what could any one ask more?

Even as regards temperament, while there is a measure of truth in the current view, it has very definite limitations. Bentham was fond of music; James Mill caused John to read more poetry than was read by any other boy then living. John himself, when he grew up, turned out to be poetic, slightly sentimental, with hankerings after emotional delights that his father had made difficult for him. The reason for the name 'Utilitarian' was that Bentham and his disciples would not put up with things that had no use, merely because they were traditional. The procedure of the Court of Chancery, which Dickens attacked in *Bleak House*, had certainly none of the intrinsic merit of the nightingale's song. It was, therefore, to be judged by the test of utility, and by this it was condemned. Bentham applied this test to all the old lumber of English law, preserved only to provide incomes for lawyers. He thought this an insufficient utility, and set to work to try to reform the law. In all such regions, the Utilitarian standard is admirable, and by this standard the utilitarians were justified. They may not have possessed the charm of the nightingale, but they did possess the merit of usefulness.

¹ *The Evangelical Revival*, by S. Baring-Gould, M.A., 1920, p. 7.

Democracy in England

DEMOCRACY, in its triumphant and self-confident form, came to the world from the United States, in association with the doctrine of the Rights of Man. In England, the first thorough-going democratic movement, that of the Chartists, took its philosophy in the main from America, but it failed, and was succeeded, after an interval, by a new demand for popular representation, led first by Bright, the friend of Cobden, and later by Gladstone, who, during the Parliament of 1841-46, had become Cobden's disciple. The inspiration of this later successful movement was derived from the Philosophical Radicals, one of whose most important effects on British politics was the character which, except during the Chartist interlude, they gave to democratic theory.

Democratic sentiment, as it existed in England, was different, in various important respects, from the democratic sentiment of America and the Continent, which will be considered in later chapters. One very important difference was that, in England, advocates of democracy appealed to history and tradition. Representative institutions, which are an important element in modern democracy, had existed uninterruptedly since the thirteenth century; no doubt the House of Commons had not at any time represented the people, but it had represented classes other than the aristocracy, and, in the seventeenth century, these classes had used it in a vigorous and successful contest for their rights. Speaking of John Bright, who won the vote for working men in 1867, Lord Morley says: 'A political leader does well to strive to keep our democracy historic. John Bright would have been a worthy comrade of John Hampden, John Selden, and John Pym. He had the very spirit of the Puritan leaders.' John Bright himself, as a Quaker, with the tradition of persecution under the Stuarts, was thoroughly conscious of his continuity with the age of Cromwell.

The desire to represent reform as a return to the purer

customs of our ancestors was very common among Radicals. At one of the first of the great Chartist open-air meetings, in 1838, Doubleday, the Chairman, in demanding manhood suffrage, said:

Universal suffrage was the usage of the country up to the middle of the reign of Henry the Sixth. Well, how was this lost? It was in the confusion of the civil wars. The people did not know its value, and under plausible pretences the law was altered. From that time to this Englishmen had been feeling the effects of this treacherous deed. The evil crept on gradually. The country was then rich, and the common people wealthy to an extent they [his hearers] had no idea of. There were hardly any taxes; and there could be none, because a parliament elected by the people took care of the people's earnings. But when this was lost all changed. The Aristocracy gradually found out that the people were too rich, and so they made laws to cure this evil.¹

Doubleday's historical accuracy is open to question, but it is characteristic of England that an extreme Radical should defend his proposals as a revival of the distant past. In Wat Tyler's rebellion, which occurred during Doubleday's Golden Age, the aim was a return to the social system of Adam and Eve.

An important difference between England and America as regards democratic sentiment is that in America it was agricultural, whereas in England it was mainly urban and industrial. The old Poor Law kept the rural labourers submissive in spite of poverty (except for the brief outbreak of 1830), and the farmers usually sided with the landowners. In the industrial regions, a different situation arose. The landowners, as a rule, did not live on the spot, and they made laws which hampered the manufacturers. From 1815 to 1846, owing to the tariff, the manufacturers were politically opposed to the aristocracy, and they enlisted the wage-earners on their side as far as seemed safe. Industry was rapidly increasing, and was technically progressive. Thus everything combined to drive the industrial population, both masters and men, into Radicalism, while the rural districts remained feudal and almost unchanging.

In America and on the Continent, democracy was intimately associated with nationalism, whereas in England the opposite was the case. The American War of Independence and the

¹ Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 23.

French revolutionary wars had associated democracy with the military power of the nation, whereas in England the military power was associated with reaction and the Duke of Wellington, and was used rather for oppression of subject nations than for self-defence. For this reason, in England, the democratic parties and statesmen were also the least warlike and imperialistic. This continued to be the case until the retirement of Gladstone in 1894.

English democratic feeling in the nineteenth century was largely generated by the period of aristocratic and regal mis-government which began in 1760 and persisted throughout the reigns of George III and George IV. The House of Lords, through the system of rotten boroughs, controlled the House of Commons; the government was inefficient and inconceivably corrupt; the taxes were oppressive, especially to the poorest part of the population, since they were largely on necessaries. The whole legislative power of Parliament was used to enrich the landowners at the expense of all other sections of the community. Everything needed reforming—education, the law, the judicial system, the prisons, the insanitary condition of the towns, taxation, the poor law, and much else. Meanwhile the rulers of the country hunted foxes, shot pheasants, and made more stringent laws against poachers. The intelligence of the nation, as well as its humanity and common sense, rebelled against the continuation of such a system.

The revolt of intelligence took the form of Philosophical Radicalism, and it was fortunate that, when reform became possible, there were men with a capacity for detail who had thought out what should be done. Owing to Bentham and his school, there was little declamation about the Rights of Man, except among the Chartists. Sentiment, on the whole, was left to the reactionaries, and attention to utility was the characteristic of the reformers. Perhaps it is for this reason that the movement which sprang from them continued for over fifty years before it produced a reaction.

The most difficult battle in the movement towards democracy was the first, the battle for the Reform Bill, which was won in 1832. Reform of the House of Commons, both by abolishing rotten boroughs and by extending the franchise, was already advocated by influential politicians before the French Revolution, but was set aside, along with all other forms of legislative progress, for the period of the French wars. Nevertheless, it

remained an aspiration of that section of the Whigs which followed Fox. When, therefore, the Whigs under Grey came into power in 1830, they set to work to carry a measure which in their view ought to have been introduced by the younger Pitt when he first came into power. Although their proposals were moderate, their language was that of democracy. Lord John Russell, in introducing the Reform Bill, said they were determined that the House of Commons should 'not be the representatives of a small class of a particular interest; but form a body . . . representing the people, springing from the people, and sympathizing with the people.'

The aristocratic Whigs of 1832 were analogous in their outlook to the aristocratic reformers in France in 1789. Mirabeau, Lafayette, and the Feuillants would have liked to achieve a peaceful and moderate reform, which would have given to France a constitution very similar to that of England after 1832. Why did the party of constitutional reform succeed in England and fail in France? No doubt for a number of reasons, but chiefly, I think, because the revolution in France was agrarian as well as urban, which was not the case in England. The French aristocrats, in spite of voting away their feudal privileges, found themselves faced by a hostility which involved financial ruin. This chilled their reforming ardour, and led them to invite foreign aid against the Revolution. The English reformers, at the very beginning of the agitation for the Reform Bill, quenched agrarian revolt in blood, and therefore felt their incomes safe. The opposition of the Tories gave way to the threat of revolution, because the matter did not appear to be one of life and death for the aristocracy. And so ultimate political power passed peacefully into the hands of the middle class.

Although the Reform Bill was passed by strictly constitutional means, it could not have become law without an effective threat of revolution. To make such a threat effective, the middle class had to enlist the support of the working men, and this necessitated raising their hopes. The measure which was actually carried did nothing for working men, but actually deprived them of the vote in the few places, such as Westminster, where they had previously had it. The middle class, while they detested the aristocratic monopoly of political power, had no wish for a system in which their employees would have votes. The Reform Bill was, in fact, just such as the middle class desired. From 1832 until Disraeli's extension of the franchise in 1867, although

most of the ministers continued to be aristocrats, the constituency to which they had to appeal was one of business men, manufacturers, and shopkeepers. The ultimate power was in new hands, and gradually the tone of British politics was changed.

To the working class, the Reform Bill and its consequences was a bitter disenchantment. One of the first measures of the reformed Parliament was the new Poor Law, which introduced the system represented in Oliver Twist. The old Poor Law needed to be changed, and in its ultimate effects the new Poor Law was no doubt less disastrous. But it involved intolerable cruelty and hardship, which its advocates justified on grounds derived from Malthus. The working men had helped the middle class to acquire power, and the new Poor Law was their reward. Working class political consciousness arose out of this betrayal. As Malthus had sprung from the old Poor Law, so Marx and Engels sprang from the new.

The first effect of disenchantment on the wage-earners was the growth of trade-unionism (described in a later chapter) which was led by Robert Owen, the founder of Socialism. When this collapsed, the belief in political rather than industrial methods revived, and led, for a while, to the Chartist movement. This movement grew out of the London Working Men's Association, founded in 1836, which advocated a 'Charter' consisting of six points: Manhood Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, Vote by Ballot, no Property Qualification, Payment of Members, and Equal Electoral Districts.

Towards Chartism, as towards all movements of political reform, Owen was unsympathetic. 'Were you to have,' he said, 'a Parliament chosen next year by universal suffrage and vote by ballot, it would be most probably the least efficient, most turbulent, and worst possible public assembly that has yet ruled this country.'

Agitation against the new Poor Law came from two opposite quarters. As a measure of middle-class Radicalism, it was opposed by Tories and by Chartists. The Tories liked the subservience to rural landowners that had been generated by the old Poor Law, but were disgusted when meetings against the new Poor Law were converted into meetings for the Charter.

The Rev G. S. Bull refused to take part in a great anti-Poor Law demonstration on Hartshead Moor because a resolution was to be proposed in favour of Universal Suffrage . . . and next

year he complained that anti-Poor Law meetings were converted into Radical meetings and declared that he would never again act with Radicalism. . . . On the other side, the Chartists were not less critical of their allies. 'In the hands of a red-hot Tory like Earl Stanhope, the nephew and admirer of that base and bloody tool of tyranny, W. Pitt,' wrote the *Chartist*, 'the anti-Poor Law agitation becomes nothing more than a trick of faction, a trick by which the Tories hope to get hold of the places and salaries of the Whigs with the intention of using their power when they get it in a much worse manner than the Whigs ever have or ever can use it.'¹

Although the measures advocated in the Charter were purely political, the ultimate aims of the Chartists were economic. As their historian Gammage (who was one of them) puts it:

The masses look on the enfranchised classes, whom they behold reposing on the couch of opulence, and contrast that opulence with the misery of their own condition. Reasoning from effect to cause there is no marvel that they arrive at the conclusion—that their exclusion from political power is the cause of our social anomalies.

But to avoid confusing the issue they never, as a body, went beyond the six points, or discussed the economic changes which they would introduce if they had the power.

The Chartist movement came to grief without having achieved any of its objects. It was hampered by the imprisonment of many of its leaders, and it suffered from internal dissensions on the question of the wisdom of appealing to physical force. But the chief cause of its collapse was the rise of the Anti-Corn Law League, which raised an issue as to which the interests of the middle and working classes were identical. The agitation for free trade, and the rapid improvement in the condition of the wage-earners after the repeal of the Corn Laws, put an end, for a time, to the bitterness of the working class against middle-class politicians.

It was John Bright, himself a middle-class cotton manufacturer, and Cobden's colleague in the Anti-Corn Law agitation, who was the leader in obtaining the vote for urban working men. He had no personal interest in the extension of the

franchise, and was chiefly actuated by dislike of war. He had opposed the Crimean War, and temporarily lost his seat in Parliament as a consequence. He hated Palmerston's swaggering bellicosity, which was popular with the bulk of the middle class, and he believed that the working class would favour a less warlike policy. So long as Palmerston lived, he was able to block all Bright's efforts for reform, but after his death in 1865 Liberals began to feel that they ought to be liberal, and Disraeli set to work to educate the Conservative party. The result was the enfranchisement of urban working men in 1867. Rural labourers, for some reason, were considered more dangerous, and had to wait till they were given the vote by Gladstone in 1885.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Free Trade

THE middle class in Great Britain, having acquired political power in 1832, naturally set to work to alter the laws so as to increase its own wealth. Two kinds of legislation were needed for the progress of the nation: one to improve conditions in the factories and mines, the other to sweep away the laws which hampered the growth of industrialism. The latter kind alone was in accordance with the interests of the manufacturers. But its most important item, the abolition of the duty on corn, was contrary to the interests of agricultural landowners, and was therefore strenuously opposed by the bulk of the aristocracy. When the industrialists spoke of the evils of dear bread, the landowners retorted with the evils of child labour and long hours in factories. In the end, each side was successful in reforming the evils by which the other side profited: Lord Shaftesbury carried his Factory Acts and Cobden carried free trade. The dispute between manufacturers and landowners was extraordinarily fortunate, since it obliged each to appeal to the tribunal of disinterested humane people.

The two sets of disputants were not, however, on a level, since the manufacturers were creating modern methods of production, while the landowners were merely receiving their rents. The British industrialists of that time were men full of ruthless energy, with the self-confidence that comes of success and new power. Many of them had risen by their own efforts. Following the Philosophical Radicals, they believed in competition as the motive force of progress, and they were impatient of everything that mitigated its intensity. They demanded the abolition of protective duties on the goods that they made as well as on the goods made by others: they felt that, given a free field and no favour, they were sure to win.

In the matter of free trade in corn, they were fighting not only for their own interests, but for the interests of their country and the world.

countries than in England, while cotton goods could be produced more cheaply in England than in other countries. While England persisted in producing its own food, there was less wealth to be divided among the population than there would be if England produced less food and more manufactures. And of that smaller total, a larger proportion went to the landlords in the shape of rent than would go if the worst lands were allowed to go out of cultivation. All this followed from Ricardo's law of rent, according to which the rent of a piece of land is the difference between its produce and that of the worst land in cultivation. Consequently free trade in corn would doubly benefit the non-landowning classes: there would be more wealth in the country, and they would obtain a larger share of the increased total. Free trade, therefore, was in the interests of the industrious classes; both masters and men.

It was, moreover, in the interests of the world at large. The nations from whom Great Britain bought food would be enriched, and the mutual benefit of trade would appease international rivalries, thus tending to promote peace. So, at least, the advocates of free trade believed.

In this way there arose a situation in which a powerful class could advocate its own interests while furthering the general good. Such situations are apt to call forth as leaders men of broad and humane outlook, in whom the element of self-interest is concealed by public spirit. Cobden, the leader in the battle for free trade, was such a man. Himself a cotton manufacturer, he was intimately aware of the pecuniary advantages of free trade to his class, but he was at the same time an internationalist, to whom free trade was part of a larger cause, the cause of world peace. When he had won free trade for his fellow manufacturers, he found, to his chagrin, that they had no use for the rest of his programme. His public spirit was an asset to them while it accorded with their self-interest, but when it ceased to do so they turned against it.

Cobden had a general outlook on politics which, though it remained largely inoperative during his lifetime owing to the adverse influence of Palmerston, became subsequently very important, since it was adopted, in the main, by Gladstone and the less Whiggish section of the Liberal Party. Moreover the prestige which he acquired through the success of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation caused Continental liberalism to be greatly influenced by his outlook, and gave him an importance which was by no means purely British.

Like many reformers, he was inspired by common sense. He considered that nations should pursue national wealth, without too much regard to such things as glory and territory. He advocated pacifism, not on any abstract *a priori* ground, but on the ground that wars and preparations for wars are wasteful considered as investments. His explicit argument for internationalism was that nationalism diminished the wealth of mankind. At the same time, behind his economic façade, he had a kind heart and a good deal of humanitarian sentiment. He suffered, it is true, from a blind spot as regards the bad conditions of industrial workers; but the policy of free trade undoubtedly improved their real wages enormously, as Cobden always contended that it would. He was no believer in Malthus or in the 'iron law of wages'; throughout the Anti-Corn-Law agitation he maintained that free trade in food would improve the position of both employer and employed in industry, and experience showed that he was right. His economics were sensible and practical, not theoretical and rigid, like the economics of James Mill or McCulloch; he selected from the economists the arguments that favoured free trade, and ignored the rest.

It was the custom in Cobden's day, and it is even more the custom in our own, to decry him as a man of base soul, who thought nothing so important to a nation as material wealth. When Cobden and Bright opposed the Crimean War (about which the nation went quite as mad as it did about the Great War), everybody declared that this showed them to be men who could not rise above considerations of pounds, shillings, and pence. Tennyson, in *Maud*, gave expression to this point of view in lines that deserve to be continually quoted as a warning to 'idealists.' Here is his description of Bright addressing a peace meeting:

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well :
This broad-brimmed hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is stuffed with his cotton, and rings
Even in his dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war!

When Tennyson saw the Crimean War coming, his reflections were:

—I thought that a war would arise in the defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on its ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch the harvest ripen, her herd increase,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore—

And the poem ends in a blaze of patriotic nobility:

—I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unrolled!
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
 For those that are crushed in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wrecked on a giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
 And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.
 Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned.

Cobden's sentiments at the same time were less exalted:

Hitherto the effects of the war have been felt by the working class, not in the form of loss of employment, but through the high price of food, which has told with great severity on the unskilled labourer, receiving the lowest rate of wages. The most numerous of this class, the agricultural labourers—that mute and

helpless multitude who have never made their voices heard in the din of politics—or their presence felt in any social movement—are the greatest sufferers. We have a school of sentimentalists who tell us that war is to elevate man in his native dignity, to depress the money power, put down mammon-worship, and the like. Let them take a rural walk (they require bracing) on the downs, or the weald, or the fens, in any part of this island south of the Trent, and they will find the wages of agricultural labourers averaging, at this moment, under twelve shillings a week; let them ask how a family of five persons, which is below *their* average, can live with bread at 2½d. a lb. Nobody can tell.

The opposition between economic common sense and 'idealism,' which reached a sharp point in the Crimean War, has gone on ever since, and, unfortunately for mankind, the 'idealists' have, on the whole, won the day. I am not prepared to maintain, as an abstract proposition of ethics, that there is nothing better than material prosperity, but I do maintain, in common with Cobden, that of all political purposes which have had important social effects the pursuit of general material wealth is the best. Nay, more: when well-fed people tell the poor that they ought to have souls above the cravings of the belly, there is something nauseous and hypocritical about the whole performance. This convenient idealism has had many forms. In the worst days of the Napoleonic wars, the Methodists and Evangelicals told the poor to centre their hopes upon Heaven, and to leave the rich in undisturbed possession here on earth. They were followed by the mediaevalists of various kinds: Coleridge, Carlyle, Disraeli, the Tractarians, and so on, whose doctrines were, in essence, a reaction against machinery and the industrial plutocrat from an aesthetic point of view. More important still, there is the nationalist point of view, represented in Cobden's England by Palmerston, and destined to prove stronger than either Cobdenism or Socialism—at least up to the present time.

All these 'noble' creeds are, in their various ways, outlets for concealed passions of cruelty or despotism or greed. Religion which teaches the worthlessness of earthly wealth may be respected when, as in the case of St Francis, it leads to a vow of poverty; but in a man like Tennyson we can hardly help suspecting that, subconsciously, it is a dodge for keeping the poor

quiet. The mediaevalists of the better sort—among whom I include Coleridge and the Tractarians—are men who find the modern world so painful that they seek escape from present reality in opium, fairy tales or the invention of a Golden Age in the past. They are not sinister, but only lacking in the robustness required in order to think useful thoughts. Disraeli, who dreamed the same dreams, was powerful enough to twist reality to his fancy: he saw our Indian Empire, not merely as a market for cotton goods, but as a revival of the splendours of Solomon or Augustus. But by lending a romantic glamour to imperialism he encouraged tyranny and plunder on the part of those whom he persuaded to share his self-deception. As for Carlyle, his idealism is of the old-fashioned sort which affords an excuse for the punishment of sinners. The men he admires most are men of blood: his typical hero is Dr Francia, dictator of Paraguay, in whose praise he can find nothing to say except that he hanged some forty scoundrels without trial. His stern morality is, in fact, only a cloak for his dyspeptic hatred of the human race. His ideals, such as they are, lead to Nietzsche, and through him, to the Nazis. As for nationalism, in so far as it is not undisguised greed, it may be defined as the association of a genuine ethical principle with a geographical or racial unit. It is argued—let us say—that the purity of family life is a matter of the highest moral import, and that it is best found between such and such parallels of latitude and such and such meridians of longitude. It follows that those who live in this virtuous area have a right, and almost a duty, to kill as many people as may be convenient in other areas, and to compel the survivors to pay tribute. Unfortunately, the superior virtue of the conquerors is apt to disappear in the process of conquest. But on the subject of nationalism I will say no more at present, since we shall be concerned with it at a later stage.

The rise in Jingoism in the middle classes was a great disappointment to Cobden. In 1835, when they had not yet grown accustomed to power, he could believe that they would support him in his love of peace. 'The middle and industrious classes of England,' he says, 'can have no interest apart from the preservation of peace. The honours, the fame, the emoluments of war belong not to them, the battle-plain is the harvest-field of the aristocracy, watered with the blood of the people.' 'At some future election,' he continues, 'we may probably see the test of "*no foreign politics*" applied to those who offer to become the

representatives of free constituencies.' Experience was to prove that in this expectation he had been mistaken: Palmerston, the most reckless of interventionists, became the idol of the middle class, and Cobden lost his seat for having opposed the Crimean War. In like manner, Marx thought that the proletarians would not willingly suffer imperialist wars. Neither Marx nor Cobden realized the change of psychology produced by the possession of political power, or the means which could be used by the rich to cajole the democracy. A disfranchised class may oppose wars made by its rulers, but when it has gained the vote it feels that wars are its wars, and becomes as bellicose as the former oligarchy.

Another of Cobden's illusions was that commerce tends to promote peace:

Commerce is the grand panacea, which, like a beneficent medical discovery, will serve to inoculate with the healthy and saving taste for civilization all the nations of the world. Not a bale of merchandise leaves our shores, but it bears the seeds of intelligence and fruitful thought to the members of some less enlightened community; not a merchant visits our seats of manufacturing industry, but he returns to his own country the missionary of freedom, peace, and good government—whilst our steam boats, that now visit every port of Europe, and our miraculous railroads, that are the talk of all nations, are the advertisements and vouchers for the value of our enlightened institutions.

The reasons which have prevented commerce from promoting peace are worth considering, since they are among the main reasons for the failure of Cobdenism. When two countries are in no degree competitors as regards the products interchanged, that is to say, when each is incapable of producing what it buys, commerce is felt to be beneficial to both, and the effects for which Cobden hoped do really take place. In his day, most commerce was of this sort. We sold our manufactures largely in countries which had no machine production, and we bought from them natural products which do not exist in the British Isles. Where commerce is of this sort, it encourages friendship between nations. But as soon as one country sells to another goods which the other is capable of producing, the anger of competitors becomes more intense than the gratification of customers, and

friendship is turned into enmity. In the years before the Great War, when, under the Merchandise Marks Act, all foreign goods sold in the United Kingdom had to be marked with the country of origin, the constant sight of the legend 'Made in Germany' caused people to think that England was losing her trade owing to German competition—a belief which had much to do with stimulating bellicose feeling. The free trade argument, that imports are paid for by exports, and do not therefore injure home production as a whole, was at no time effective with those who suffered from foreign competition. In all advanced countries outside Great Britain, emulation of British industry was beginning in Cobden's time, but manufacturers were at a disadvantage as compared with the English and Scottish industrialists, and therefore demanded protection, which they obtained wherever they had sufficient political influence. Great Britain was not loved on account of cheap goods in the countries that were trying to build up industries on the British model. Intensification of commerce brought intensification of national enmity, and the development of sentiment was the opposite of what Cobden had expected. This was one of his most important mistakes in political psychology.

Cobden was politically opposed to the aristocracy, and in his earlier years to the working class, though to a lesser degree: to the former, because they represented privilege without brains; to the latter, because they lacked education. He had a very great admiration for America, largely because in that country industrial enterprise is not hampered by aristocratic influence and tradition, and foreign policy is free from the habit of meddling in the affairs of other countries. He chose as the motto of his first pamphlet Washington's dictum: 'The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible.' Throughout his political career, he urged this maxim upon English statesmen, but in vain. When, in 1859, Palmerston offered him Cabinet office, he refused because he could not acquiesce in the foreign policy of that blustering old ruffian.

Unlike most of the politicians of his day, Cobden regarded industry rather than armaments as the source of national power, and accordingly considered America more important than Russia. He says:

It is to the industry, the economy, and peaceful policy of

America, and not to the growth of Russia, that our statesmen and politicians, of whatever creed, ought to direct their anxious study; for it is by these, and not by the efforts of barbarian force, that the power and greatness of England are in danger of being superseded: yes, by the successful rivalry of America shall we, in all probability, be placed second in the rank of nations.

To have arrived at this conviction in 1835 showed more sagacity than most people would now realize. Even as late as 1898, the Kaiser still expected Spain to be victorious in the Spanish-American war. The British government was perhaps less belated than William II, but certainly did not reach the opinion expressed by Cobden until after the American Civil War.

With regard to the freedom of industrialists from aristocratic interference in America, Cobden says:

Nothing more strongly illustrates the disadvantages under which an old country, like Great Britain, labours in competing with her younger rival, than to glance at the progress of railroads in the two empires.

At the same time that, in the United States, almost every day beheld a new railway company incorporated, by some one of the States' legislatures, at the cost only of a few dollars, and nearly by acclamation, the British Parliament intercepted by its votes some of the most important projects that followed in the train of the Liverpool railroad.

The London and Birmingham Company, after spending upwards of forty thousand pounds, in attempting to obtain for its undertaking the sanction of the legislature, was unsuccessful in the House of Lords. The following characteristic questions are extracted from the evidence taken before the committee:

Do you know the name of Lady Hastings' place?—How near to it does your line go?—Taking the look out of the principal rooms of the house, does it run in front of the principal rooms?—How far from the house is the point where it becomes visible?—That would be about a quarter of a mile?—Could the engines be heard in the house at that distance?—Is there any cutting or embankment there?—Is it in sight of the house?—Looking to the country, is it not possible that the line could be taken at a greater distance from the residence of Lady Hastings?

In this emphasis on the evils of control by ignorant land-

owners Cobden was wholly justified. There is, however, another side to the question of American railways. The capitalists, being uncontrolled except by corruptible legislatures, acquired enormous areas of public land for nothing, and invented ingenious devices for swindling ordinary shareholders in the interests of directors. A regular technique was developed for transferring wealth first from public ownership to the shareholders in a company, and from them to the directors. By this means economic power came to be concentrated in the hands of a few unprecedentedly rich men.

Of the corruption in American business and politics, Cobden seems to have been unaware, although it had existed ever since Washington's first Presidency. Like almost all the men of his time, he believed in competition, but it was to be competition according to certain rules, like cricket. He would not have liked competition in buying judges to sanction breaches of the law, or in inducing railways to carry the goods of one competitor more cheaply than those of the others. It was also against the rules, as he conceived them, for the State to take a hand in the game by helping its nationals at the expense of foreigners. The State was merely to be umpire, and to see that the competitors stuck to the rules. William James tells of a young man who, having learnt that the purpose of football is to get the ball to the other side of the goal-posts, got up one dark night and put it there. People who grow rich by the help of government seemed, to Cobden and the 'Manchester School,' as unsportsmanlike as this young man. This analogy would, however, have seemed to them grossly unfair. They did not realize that competition, as they conceived it, was a game with rules; they thought of it as a law of nature. As they were honest and worthy citizens, the criminal law in the background imposed no *conscious* limitation upon their activities. When they heard of the doings of Vanderbilt and Gould, they were shocked: this was not what they had meant at all! Yet undeniably it was competition.

Cobden regarded imperialism as folly, and had very just views on India, even during the mutiny, when most English people lost their heads. At the height of the madness on the subject of the mutiny he writes:

Unfortunately for me I can't even co-operate with those who seek to 'reform' India, for I have no faith in the power of England to govern that country at all permanently; and

though I should like to see the company abolished—because that is a screen between the English nation and a full sight of its awful responsibilities—yet I do not believe in the possibility of the Crown governing India under the control of Parliament. If the House of Commons were to renounce all responsibility for domestic legislation, and give itself exclusively to the task of governing one hundred millions of Asiatics, it would fail. Hindostan must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly—*according to our notions*—by its own colour, kith and kin, than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the Antipodes.

At the same period, writing to Bright, he says:

It will be a happy day when England has not an acre of territory in Continental Asia. But how such a state of things is to be brought about is more than I can tell. I bless my stars that I am not in a position to be obliged to give public utterance to my views on the all-absorbing topic of the day, for I could not do justice to my own convictions and possess the confidence of any constituency in the kingdom. For where do we find even an individual who is not imbued with the notion that England would sink to ruin if she were deprived of her Indian Empire? Leave me, then, to my pigs and sheep, which are not labouring under any such delusions.

He was not at this time in Parliament, and was not obliged to give public expression to his views on India, but he felt himself even more isolated than during the Crimean War. He found that the manufacturers of Lancashire and Yorkshire regarded India as a market to be preserved for them by British bayonets, and he complained that they did not understand free trade principles. It does not seem to have occurred to him that India, left to itself, might develop a cotton industry by the help of a tariff, and no longer have need of imports from Manchester. The reasons for not attempting to govern India by force are, to my mind, perfectly valid, but I do not think that, at that time, they could have been reconciled with the pecuniary self-interest of the British textile industry. Free trade was, for Cobden, much more than a measure of fiscal common sense; it was part of a deep moral conviction. He believed firmly that honesty was the

best policy, and was therefore sometimes a little blind to the best policy when this was in fact dishonest. The development of industry from his day to our own has shown that on this point his heart was better than his head.

Cobden is criticized, in our day, from two opposite points of view: by nationalists, on account of the cosmopolitanism which inspired his enthusiasm for free trade, and by Socialists on account of his dislike of trade unionism and Factory Acts. I think that perhaps the criticism of him from the latter point of view has been somewhat more fierce than it should have been. He certainly desired to improve the condition of the working classes, and he certainly did improve their condition most remarkably. From the time when free trade was adopted, real wages rose with great rapidity, except during the Crimean War, when we were blockading the ports from which most imported grain had come. The opening of the Middle West by means of railways caused a further improvement in real wages, but could not have done so without free trade. Lord Shaftesbury, who tackled the problem of conditions of labour philanthropically, was successful in causing the adoption of various valuable Factory Acts; but I do not think a sober inquirer can attribute nearly as much of the increase in the happiness of wage-earners to him as to Cobden. Nevertheless, owing to sentimentalism, Lord Shaftesbury has received much more credit than Cobden in this respect.

It is, of course, impossible to judge with any accuracy the share of free trade in promoting British prosperity, but it is at any rate obvious that, if the Corn Laws had remained in force, much more agricultural labour would have been required to feed the increasing population, and less food would have been secured by a given amount of labour on British land than by exchanging manufactures for food produced abroad. The increase of real wages, however caused, was remarkable. According to Clapham, real ages rose sharply from 1850 to 1874, after which they fell somewhat until 1886, and then rose again, until in 1890 they had surpassed the level of 1874. The average of real wages in 1874 was between 50 and 60 per cent above that of 1850. As for the cotton trade, with which Cobden was specially connected, even at the worst moment, in 1886, average earnings were still 48 per cent above the level of 1850. As regards the period before the repeal of the Corn Laws, money wages were lower in 1850 than in 1810, and real wages had risen little, if at all, between

1810 and 1846, when Peel became converted to Free Trade. In view of these facts, the importance of Cobden in raising wages can hardly be denied.

At the same time, it is clear that Cobden was opposed to all restrictions upon free competition between wage-earners. His attitude towards child labour was less doctrinaire. He was in favour of limiting the hours of labour for children, and the age at which they could be employed, but he was opposed to the Ten Hours Bill, which would have made sure that children did not work more than ten hours in factories by forbidding the factories to be at work more than this period in each day. Interference with the hours of adult labour seemed to him objectionable in principle, although experience had shown that it was very difficult to limit effectually the labour of children alone. In a letter written in 1836, in connection with his candidature at Stockport, he makes the highly unrealistic suggestion that every working man should save £20 out of his wages, so as to be free to emigrate to America. He appears to have been quite unaware of the evils revealed by Royal Commissions. In his first pamphlet, on England, Ireland, and America, he argues with much force that we ought to set to work to cure the poverty of Irish peasants before we interfere philanthropically in Continental affairs, but it never occurs to him that the same argument applies to industrial conditions in England.

His attitude to trade unions is frankly expressed in a letter to his brother in 1842. 'Depend upon it,' he says, 'nothing can be got by fraternising with Trade Unions. They are founded upon principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly. I would rather live under a Dey of Algiers than a Trades Committee.' This view was, no doubt, that of the bulk of employers in his day; moreover, it was in accordance with his general belief in free competition. But it illustrates his incapacity to see labour questions except from the standpoint of the employer.

He was, of course, opposed to all industrial action by the State except when absolutely necessary. In the last year of his life, in an elaborate speech, he argued that 'the Government should not be allowed to manufacture for itself any article which could be obtained from private producers in a competitive market.'

The victory of free trade in 1846 was not quite complete. It was then decided that from 1849 onwards there should be a duty of 1s. a quarter on grain; some other remnants of protec-

tion also remained, and the last of them was not abolished until 1874. The general policy of the government was in favour of free trade until 1914, in spite of a protectionist campaign in the '80s, and another, more formidable, inaugurated by Joseph Chamberlain in 1903. What defeated him with the electorate was largely the lingering memory of the 'hungry forties.' During the earlier part of the free trade period, especially, every class in England made extraordinarily rapid progress. Free trade alone, of course, did not account for this; the industrial supremacy of England and the trans-continental railways in America were essential factors. But without free trade, progress could not have been so rapid. From 1846 to 1914, the doctrines of the economists, with occasional modifications, proved, on the whole, sufficient to provide continually increasing well-being in all classes.

Elsewhere, there were more complications. Napoleon III, it is true, was induced by Cobden to introduce freer trade with England by the Commercial Treaty of 1860, which abolished previous prohibitions of imports on a host of articles, and reduced French duties on almost all imports from England to thirty per cent or less. But this was only passed by Napoleon's fiat, and was never widely popular in France. The manufacturers, as was natural, felt it impossible to stand up against English competition without the help of a tariff. In spite of their lack of enthusiasm, however, Napoleon made a similar treaty two years later with the German Zollverein. The only class in France who were whole-heartedly in favour of free trade were the vine-growers, since they depended upon exports. But when their business was ruined by the phylloxera, they became persuaded that, in some inscrutable manner, a tariff would enable them to cope with this noxious micro-organism. From that moment there have been no free-traders in France, except a few isolated intellectuals. But owing to commercial treaties, concluded under the influence of Cobden, it was not till 1892 that France adopted a tariff involving general high protection.

In Germany, where the multitude of petty states with separate customs caused intolerable vexations to commerce, the most important step towards free trade, from the industrialist's standpoint, was the establishment of the Zollverein (Customs Union), which, chiefly through the action of Prussia, gradually came to include all Northern Germany, and, after 1871, the whole of the new Empire except Hamburg and Bremen. In the formation of this Union, especially before the political unification of Germany,

free trade theory, which was first introduced to Germans by Stein, naturally played a part. Moreover political power was mainly in the hands of territorial magnates, with the result that industrialists felt as they did in England before 1846. Consequently Liberal and middle-class Germany was on the whole in favour of free trade until German unity substituted the sentiment of nationalism for that of liberalism. In 1879, Bismarck led Germany to abandon the policy of virtual free trade which had been dominant. From this moment, belief in free competition played no part in German policy.

In America, half of Cobden's creed was adopted in the North, and the other half in the South. The South was in favour of free trade, since it lived by exporting cotton, and the only effect of a tariff was to raise the prices of what it had to buy. But the South depended on slavery. The North had democracy and free labour, but was determined to build up its industries by means of a high tariff. It was during the Civil War, and by means of a war-time tariff, that Northern industry first became really important. From that time onwards, America has been protectionist even at times when the revenue due to the tariff was not needed and was an embarrassment to the Administration.

But although, outside England, his influence on legislation was superficial and transient, Cobden's prestige on the Continent was immense. In 1846, after his great victory in England, he made a triumphal progress round Europe.

His reception was everywhere that of a great discoverer in a science which interests the bulk of mankind much more keenly than any other, the science of wealth. He had persuaded the richest country in the world to revolutionize its commercial policy. People looked on him as a man who had found out a momentous secret. In nearly every important town that he visited in every great country in Europe, they celebrated his visit by a banquet, toasts, and congratulatory speeches. He had interviews with the Pope, with three or four kings, with ambassadors, and with all the prominent statesmen. He never lost an opportunity of speaking a word in season. Even from the Pope he entreated that His Holiness's influence might be used against bull-fighting in Spain.¹

His Holiness, who was at this time (1847) still Liberal, and who

¹ Morley, *Life of Cobden*, I, p. 464.

had not yet realized that commerce is productive of sin, was very gracious. He promised to look into the question of bull-fighting, 'professed himself to be favourable to Free Trade, and said all he could do should be done to forward it, but modestly added that he could do but little.'

Metternich, whom he saw a few months later, talked to him incessantly for a long time, but not about free trade. He did not therefore greatly impress Cobden, who thought that his appearance suggested 'high polish rather than any native force of character' and that his conversation was 'more subtle than profound.' After the interview he wrote optimistically in his journal:

He is probably the last of those State physicians who, looking only to the symptoms of a nation, content themselves with superficial remedies from day to day, and never attempt to probe beneath the surface, to discover the source of the evils which afflict the social system. This order of statesmen will pass away with him, because too much light has been shed upon the laboratory of Governments, to allow them to impose upon mankind with the old formulas.¹

Austria and Russia were polite though not enthusiastic, but in Spain, Italy, and Germany, his popularity was overwhelming. In Spain he was likened to Christopher Columbus, in Italy he was serenaded by musicians, while his German admirers presented him with a large sum of money. This annoyed Treitschke, who hated him as a 'materialist' and said:

The transformation in England inspired the free traders of all lands with victorious self-confidence, and during the ensuing two decades their doctrines maintained the upper hand almost universally throughout the civilised world. Every new discovery which the century could boast had contributed to bind the nations together, so that it seemed almost irrational to sever them by hostile tariffs. A long period of the mutual concession of commercial facilities began, and this favoured general well-being. But in the end the old truth was realised, that the home market is of much more importance than world trade.

The immense vogue of free trade doctrine in the mid-nineteenth century was due to Cobden, but the doctrine itself was

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

first promulgated, so long ago as 1776, by Adam Smith, and was later submerged in the Napoleonic wars. The abstract argument in favour of free trade, as set forth by Smith and accepted by most subsequent British economists, is derived from the principle of division of labour. If A is good at making motor cars and B is good at making wine, it is profitable to both that each should confine himself to his own specialty and should exchange his product with the other. If each spent half the day making cars and half making wine, each would have fewer cars and less wine than if each sticks to his own job. This argument remains valid if A lives in one country and B in another. But these abstract considerations had little effect on governments.

It was the German economist List who first (in 1841) provided a theoretical defence of protectionism. This was the famous 'infant industries' argument. Take, say, steel. It may be that a country is well suited by nature to the development of a great steel industry, but that, owing to foreign competition, the initial expenses are prohibitive, unless government assistance is obtainable. This situation existed in Germany when List wrote and for some time after that. But experience has shown that protection, once granted, cannot be withdrawn even when the infant has grown into a giant.

Another argument, which is not purely economic, and which has had more influence on governments, is that a nation should, as far as possible, produce all that is needed in time of war. This contention is part of the doctrine of economic nationalism, to which the Manchester School, who were pacifists and anti-imperialists, were bitterly opposed. Economic nationalism proved, in the end, more powerful than the purely commercial outlook of Cobden; but this was only one aspect of the growth of nationalism in general.

The principle of free competition, as advocated by the Manchester School, was one which failed to take account of certain laws of social dynamics. In the first place, competition tends to issue in somebody's victory, with the result that it ceases and is replaced by monopoly. Of this the classic example is afforded by the career of Rockefeller. In the second place, there is a tendency for the competition between individuals to be replaced by competition between groups, since a number of individuals can increase their chances of victory by combination. Of this principle there are two important examples, trade unionism and economic nationalism. Cobden, as we have seen, objected to

trade unions, and yet they were an inevitable result of competition between employers and employed as to the share of the total product which each should secure. Cobden objected also to economic nationalism, yet this arose among capitalists from motives very similar to those which produced trade unionism among employees. Both in America and in Germany, it was obvious to industrialists that they could increase their wealth by combining to extract favours from the State; they thus competed as a national group against national groups in other countries. Although this was contrary to the principles of the Manchester School, it was an economically inevitable development. In all these ways, Cobden failed to understand the laws of industrial evolution, with the result that his doctrines had a merely temporary validity.

Although the principle of free competition was increasingly limited in practice—by Factory Acts, trade unions, protective tariffs, and trusts—it remained an ideal to which business men appealed whenever there was any proposal to interfere with their activities. The men at the head of vast monopolies in America still profess to believe in competition—meaning, however, competition for jobs on the part of those who wish to be employed by them. They still believe, as Francis Place did, that competition is the only possible incentive to industry. This belief has become harmful, since it interferes with organization where this would be more efficient than unregulated competition. However, it has much less intensity than it had sixty years ago. At that time it seemed consecrated as a cosmic law by Darwin.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. It may be regarded as the application of Benthamite economics to the animal world. As every one knows, it was through reading Malthus that Darwin was led to the principles of the Struggle for Existence and the Survival of the Fittest. In his theory, all animals are engaged in the economic struggle to procure a livelihood, and those that have most thoroughly acquired the maxims of Smiles's *Self Help* survive and found families, while the others perish. Hence emerges a general tendency to progress: the cleverest animals gradually oust the stupid ones, until at last we arrive at man.

Darwinism, as it appears in the writings of its founder, and still more in those of Herbert Spencer, is the completion of Philosophical Radicalism. But it contained elements which would

have shocked Helvetius and James Mill, more especially those elements connected with heredity. It has been one of the characteristic doctrines of radicalism that the mental differences between men are due to differences of education, taking that word in its widest sense. But Darwin regards heredity combined with spontaneous variation as essential to evolution. There are many species of insects among which one generation dies before the next is born; obviously their adaptation to environment owes nothing to education. Every Darwinian must hold that, among human beings, there are congenital differences of mental powers. James Mill informed his son John that his (John's) attainments were due, not to native ability, but to his having a father willing to take so much trouble in teaching him. A Darwinian would have attributed some of John's progress to his heredity. This made a breach in the Radical doctrine that all men are born equal.

It was, of course, easy to adapt Darwinism to nationalism. The Jews, or the Nordics, or the Ecuadorians, are pronounced to be the best stock, and it is inferred that everything ought to be done to make them rich—although statistics prove that the rich have fewer descendants than the poor. In this way, also, Darwinism afforded a transition from the cosmopolitan outlook of the Philosophical Radicals to the racial bigotry of the Hitlerites.

It is amusing to observe how, as belief in free competition in the economic world decayed, the biologists began to be dissatisfied with the Struggle for Existence as the driving force of evolution. What they have substituted is far from definite, but at any rate it is something quite different. Perhaps when our politics have settled down our theory of evolution will again become clear.

There was one other respect in which Darwinism was fatal to the Cobdenite form of belief in competition. Competition, as conceived by the Manchester School, was not only between individuals rather than between groups, but was purely economic, and within a framework of law. Competition between animals is not thus limited, and it was obvious historically that the most important form of competition between human beings has been war. Thus Darwinism in its popular form tended to be bellicose and imperialistic, although Darwin himself had no such tendencies.

Darwinism, therefore, in spite of its origin, has been a force

inimical both to Cobdenism and to Philosophical Radicalism. By emphasizing heredity, it has lessened men's belief in the omnipotence of education, and has substituted the conviction that some races are inherently superior to others. This, in turn, has led to an emphasis upon nationalism. And the recognition of war as a means of competition has dissolved the marriage of competition with pacifism, which was always an ill-assorted union, since the natural partner of pacifism is co-operation.

I am not suggesting that popular Darwinism, in drawing these inferences, has been scientifically justified. In a different environment, it might have retained the political outlook of Darwin and Spencer. Certainly biology, as it is at present, does not warrant nationalism or love of war. But just as the doctrines of Malthus caused an intellectual difficulty for the earlier forms of Radicalism, so the doctrines of Darwin caused an intellectual difficulty for the later forms. Just as the earlier difficulty was overcome by birth control so the later difficulty will be overcome by eugenics. But it will have to be a more scientific and less biased form of eugenics than any now in vogue.

SECTION C

SOCIALISM

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Owen and Early British Socialism

THE doctrine of *laissez faire* was not left unchallenged, even in the days of its greatest influence. Most owners of factories thought of the State as the source of tariffs and Orders in Council, and sought to reduce its functions to the punishment of discontented workmen. Organization appeared to them an evil, and they wished every man (within the limits of the law) to be left to sink or swim as his own strength might decide.

The factory could, however, suggest a quite different order of ideas. On the one hand, any large factory is itself an organization, and derives its efficiency from being well organized. In the second place, the productive capacity of a well-equipped factory is so great that, if there is no organization of output, there may be a glut, by which employers will be ruined and men will be thrown out of work. Thus the factory viewed from within suggests the utility of organization, while viewed from without it shows the dangers of unfettered production. It was reflections such as these that caused Robert Owen, after many successful years as a manufacturer, to become the founder of Socialism.

In every important movement, the pioneers are not the intellectual equals of the men who come later. There were writers of Italian verse before Dante, Protestant Reformers before Luther, inventors of Steam engines before James Watt. Such men deserved the credit of originality in conception, but not of success in execution. The same may be said of Robert Owen. He is not so comprehensive as Karl Marx: he is not so able a reasoner as his orthodox contemporaries who built upon the foundation laid by Adam Smith. But just because his ideas are not rigidly confined within a system, he is an initiator of various

important lines of development. In some ways he is curiously modern. He considers industry from the standpoint of the wage-earner's interests, while retaining the dictatorial mentality of the large employer. In this he reminds one of Soviet Russia: it is easy to imagine him entering with zest into the preparation of Five Year Plans, and coming to grief through failure to understand agriculture. It would, however, be misleading to press the analogy. Owen was not quite a sage, but he was quite a saint; few men have been more wholly lovable. After the dry and dusty atmosphere of the Utilitarians, and amid the horrors of the factory system of his day, his warm and generous personality is as refreshing as summer rain.

Robert Owen was born in the small town of Newtown, Montgomeryshire, in the year 1771, and died in the same place in 1858.¹ During these eighty-seven years his incredibly active life passed through many phases, some important, some unimportant, but all interesting as illustrating a very remarkable character. His father was a saddler, and also postmaster, but the salary of this office certainly did not exceed £10 a year. Robert went to school at about four years old, but at the age of seven, having mastered the three Rs, he became an usher, and during the next two years he learnt little in school except the art of teaching. He had, however, certain advantages outside school hours. 'As I was known to and knew every family in the town, I had the libraries of the clergyman, physician, and lawyer—the learned men of the town—thrown open to me, with permission to take home any volume which I liked, and I made full use of the liberty give to me.' Three maiden ladies, all Methodists, tried to convert him to their faith, but 'as I read religious works of all parties, I became surprised, first at the opposition between the different sects of Christians; afterwards at the deadly hatred between the Jews, Christians, Mahomedans, Hindoos, Chinese, etc., etc., and between these and what they called Pagans and Infidels. The study of these contending faiths, and their deadly hatred to each other, began to create doubts in my mind respecting the truth of any one of these divisions. . . . My reading religious works combined with my other readings, compelled me to feel strongly at ten years of age that there must be something fundamentally wrong in all religions, as they had been taught up to that period.'

¹ The biographical material in what follows is mainly from Podmore's *Robert Owen, a Biography*, 1906; Cole's *Life of Owen* is also useful.

According to his own recollection, he was only once punished by his parents:

I was always desirous to meet the wishes of both my parents, and never refused to do whatever they asked me to do. One day my mother indistinctly said something to me to which I supposed the proper answer was 'no,' and in my usual way I said 'no'—supposing I was meeting her wishes. Not understanding me, and supposing that I refused her request, she immediately, and to me rather sharply—for her custom was to speak kindly to me—said 'What! Won't you?' Having said 'no,' I thought if I said 'yes, I will' I should be contradicting myself, and should be expressing a falsehood, and I said again 'no,' but without any idea of disobeying her. If she had then patiently and calmly enquired what my thoughts and feelings were, a proper understanding would have arisen, and everything would have proceeded as usual. But my mother, not comprehending my thoughts and feelings, spoke still more sharply and angrily—for I had never previously disobeyed her, and she was no doubt greatly surprised and annoyed when I repeated that I would not. My mother never chastised any of us—this was left for my father to do, and my brothers and sisters occasionally felt a whip which was kept to maintain order among the children; but I had never previously been touched with it. My father was called in and my refusal stated. I was again asked if I would do what my mother required, and I said firmly 'no,' and I then felt the whip every time after I refused when asked if I would yield and do what was required. I said 'no' every time I was so asked, and at length said quietly but firmly—"You may kill me, but I will not do it"; and this decided the contest. There was no attempt ever afterwards to correct me. From my own feelings, which I well remember when a child, I am convinced that very often punishment is not only useless, but very pernicious, and injurious to the punisher and the punished.

At the age of ten, Owen persuaded his parents that he was old enough to seek his fortune in the world. His father gave him forty shillings and sent him to London, to stay with his elder brother, who had a saddler's business in High Holborn. After six weeks, this ten-year-old boy obtained a situation with a Mr James McGuffog, a shopkeeper at Stamford in Lincolnshire. From that moment, he never cost his parents a penny. All went well: his

employer liked him, and he liked his employer. Their only disagreements seem to have been about religion:

It was with the greatest reluctance, and after long contests in my mind, that I was compelled to abandon my first and deep-rooted impressions in favour of Christianity. But being obliged to give up my faith in this sect, I was at the same time compelled to reject all others, for I had discovered that all had been based on the same absurd imagination, 'that each one formed his own qualities—determined his own thoughts, will, and action,—and was responsible for them to God and to his fellow-men.' My own reflections compelled me to come to very different conclusions. My reason taught me that I could not have made one of my own qualities—that they were forced upon me by Nature; that my language, religion, and habits were forced upon me by Society; and that I was entirely the child of Nature and Society; that Nature gave the qualities, and Society directed them. Thus was I forced, through seeing the error of their foundation, to abandon all belief in every religion which had been taught to man. But my religious feelings were immediately replaced by the spirit of universal charity—not for a sect or a party, or for a country or a colour, but for the human race, and with a real and ardent desire to do them good.

However, it presently became necessary to obtain a new situation, and one was found in the shop of Messrs Flint & Palmer, on London Bridge, where he thought himself rich on £25 a year. His duties here were onerous. He had to be in the shop by eight o'clock, ready dressed, 'and dressing then was no slight affair. Boy as I was then, I had to wait my turn for the hairdresser to powder and pomatum and curl my hair, for I had two large curls on each side, and a stiff pigtail, and until all this was very nicely and systematically done, no one could think of appearing before a customer.' The work was not finished when the shop closed, and often it was two o'clock in the morning before he could get to bed. He did not like having no leisure for self-education, and he feared the long hours might, in the end, injure his health, so he obtained a new situation with a Mr Satterfield of Manchester. Here he remained until 1789, when, having reached the mature age of eighteen, he decided to start in business on his own account.

At this time, Crompton's mule was a very recent invention,

but was not patented. Owen borrowed £100 from his brother, and, in partnership with a man named Jones, set to work to manufacture spinning-mules. But in the following year Jones found a partner with more capital, and Owen was bought out; he was to receive six mules in payment, but in fact received only three. With these three, he started a factory, and in the first year made a profit of £300.

At the end of this year, he heard that a Mr Drinkwater, a rich fustian manufacturer, was in need of a new manager, and he applied for the job. Being asked what salary he wanted, he said: 'Three hundred a year.' Mr Drinkwater, in horror, exclaimed that he had already that morning interviewed many applicants, and all their demands together did not amount to so much. Owen, however, refused to come down, and proved that he was earning as much by his own factory. In the proper style of the go-getter's manual, Owen managed to impress Mr Drinkwater and to obtain the job. He was very successful, and was soon taken into partnership. (He was now twenty.) However, when an opportunity occurred of amalgamating with the important firm of Mr Oldknow, who wished to marry Drinkwater's daughter, Owen was asked how much he would take to cancel the partnership; his feelings were hurt, he destroyed the deed of partnership, and resigned his position as manager. He suffered no loss by this rash action, being so favourably known that nothing interfered with his success, and he was soon in a new partnership, in which, as before, everything prospered with him.

His next step—which determined his subsequent business career—was to marry the daughter of a rich Scottish manufacturer, David Dale, and buy up his mills at New Lanark. This occurred when he was twenty-eight. David Dale, who was very devout, had for some time objected to Owen as a son-in-law, on account of his views on religion. But no one could long resist the charm of Owen's character. When it came to selling the mills, Mr Dale—a very successful business man, and a Scotchman—left it to Owen to fix the price. Owen said he valued the mills at £60,000. 'If you think so,' replied Mr Dale, 'I will accept the proposal as you have stated it, if your friends also approve of it.' Owen's friends (who were his partners) did approve, and the transaction was completed. Owen's marriage to Mr Dale's daughter took place shortly afterwards, in September 1799. She remained devout, and was persuaded that her husband would go to hell. Nevertheless she loved him all her life, and he loved

her when his projects left him leisure to remember her. For many years they lived at New Lanark, and he, as far as his partners would let him, conducted the place on model lines. It was invariably successful from a business point of view, and its success in other respects made it famous throughout the world.

Owen's years in Manchester had given him the opportunity of making friends with men of intellectual ability. In 1793 he became a member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, to which he in turn proposed Dalton, the man who introduced the atomic theory into chemistry. Dalton was an intimate friend of Owen. Dr Perceval, the founder of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, was a strong advocate of factory legislation, and probably influenced Owen on the subject. After this time, there is little evidence of Owen learning from others.

The life of Robert Owen may be divided into four periods. In the first, he is the typical hero of Smiles's *Self-Help*, rising rapidly by his own efforts to a position of wealth and influence. This period ends with his acquisition of New Lanark. In the second period he appears as the benevolent yet shrewd employer, who could make his factory pay in spite of philanthropic methods which other employers thought sure to lead to ruin. In this period he was still amazingly successful, but what made his success amazing was the combination of business and virtue. This phase of his life begins, in 1815, to give way to the phase of social reform, though he remained associated with New Lanark, more or less loosely, until 1828 or 1829. In his social reform period he was not successful in any immediate sense, though he inaugurated Socialism, the co-operative movement, and working-class free thought. Gradually he passed from being a revered leader of the working-class movement to being the High Priest of a small sect; after about 1835, he ceased to have public importance and became a mere visionary, ending in spiritualism. His early successes and his subsequent failures have the same source: self-confidence. So long as he was attempting things essentially feasible, his self-confidence was an asset; when, later, he tried to achieve in a few years changes requiring at least a century, his failure and his self-confidence came into conflict, driving him away from the real world—further and further away, till he was left with voices out of his own past, where alone his unconscious will had the omnipotence that he unconsciously expected of it in every sphere. Perhaps no man can be a great

innovator without more belief in himself than reason can warrant. The greatest innovators have thought themselves divine, or nearly so; in Owen this same disease existed, but in a mild and not unamiable form. Where other prophets have declared the word of God, Owen declared the word of Reason, and it amazed him that men's intellects could be so blind; but of their hearts he always thought well.

At New Lanark, Owen's aims were still modest, and his success was great. He first installed up-to-date machinery and an efficient manager. He then extirpated theft, which had been rampant, without any legal punishment. He next tackled drunkenness: he appointed men to patrol the streets of New Lanark at night, and report any cases of drunkenness, for which a fine was inflicted. Within a few years, partly by this method and partly by personal influence, he succeeded in almost entirely stopping drunkenness except on New Year's Day. He insisted on cleanliness in the streets. To encourage industrious habits in the mills, he invented a curious scheme. He had bits of wood, with the four sides painted black, blue, yellow and white respectively: black for bad, blue for indifferent, yellow for good, and white for excellent. One of these was prominently displayed near each workman, showing whichever colour his work and conduct deserved. Oddly enough, this method was found very effective; in the end, almost everybody deserved yellow or white.¹

So far, we have been considering what Owen did to make the mills productive. In this he was so successful that, during the first ten years of his management, the business earned a profit of £60,000 in addition to interest at 5 per cent on the capital. His partners, therefore, had every reason to be satisfied with him. Having secured their approbation, he was free to attempt more philanthropic measures.

When Owen took over New Lanark, the number of employees was between 1,800 and 2,000, of whom 500 were apprenticed children from the workhouses. He resolved at once to take no more pauper children. He took only children over ten, and these he obtained from the neighbouring town of Lanark, by the consent of their parents. His partners insisted on a working day of fourteen hours, less two hours' interval for meals; but in 1816 he succeeded in getting these hours somewhat reduced. As for

¹ An analogous custom exists in the USSR at the present time. Collective farms are awarded badges symbolizing their degrees of merit: for example, an aeroplane for the best and a crawling crab for the worst.

wages: in 1819, the average wages were, for men, 9s. 11d. a week; for women, 6s.; for boys, 4s. 3d.; for girls, 3s. 5d. It must be admitted that there is nothing Utopian about these figures. In such matters, Owen was not free, since he had to earn dividends. As it was, his partners were always complaining of his philanthropy. In 1809, and again in 1813, he bought out the existing partners by the help of new ones, who, he hoped, would give him a freer hand. On the second occasion, the bulk of the new money was supplied by Jeremy Bentham and a Quaker, William Allen. With the latter he still had difficulties, but they were of a different sort from those that he had had with his former partners, and on the whole less serious.

At first, he had some trouble with his workpeople, owing to his being a southerner and a stranger. But he gradually won them over, partly by his personality, but still more by his action in 1806, when the United States placed an embargo on all exports to Great Britain, thereby cutting off the supplies of raw cotton. For four months the mills had to be closed, but he kept on all his employees at full wages. After this, all had confidence in him.

One of the most interesting parts of Owen's management was the establishment of a school in connection with the factory. Like all other reformers of that period, he attributed enormous importance to education, and held that character is wholly, or almost wholly, the product of circumstances. But unlike the others, who acknowledged the authority of Helvetius, he discovered this great truth himself (or so he says) through the effect upon his digestion of very hot 'flummery,' a kind of porridge. He certainly had one advantage over James Mill: he loved and understood children. Everything that he says about education is good, and he understands the emotions and the bodies of children as well as their intellects. There was a nursery school on thoroughly modern lines. Dancing, in suitable costume, was an important part of the curriculum, which pained Mr Allen, especially as the boys wore kilts instead of trousers. He made Owen promise that this sort of thing should cease, but apparently it continued none the less.

New Lanark was famous throughout the world, and in ten years nearly 20,000 persons visited it. Among others came the Grand Duke Nicholas (afterwards Tsar), who stayed the night at Owen's house and listened to Owen expounding his views for two hours or more. He offered to take one of Owen's sons into his service, and even suggested that Owen himself should come to

Russia with two millions of the surplus population and their families. In view of Nicholas's later career, this incident is curious.

When Owen, in 1813, visited London with a view to getting new partners, he made the acquaintance of almost everybody of note—not only all the Philosophical Radicals, but also the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and many other prominent men. Everybody liked him, and he had not yet advocated any obviously subversive doctrines. In 1814 he published *A new view of Society*, in which he set forth his favourite doctrine of the power of circumstances in moulding character, and deduced that enormous improvements could easily be effected. This work was sent to almost everybody who had influence, and even to Napoleon in Elba. Strange to say, Napoleon read it, and returned it with favourable comments. When he returned from Elba, Owen held that he should be allowed a chance to put its precepts into practice. Owen's friend the Prime Minister, however, thought otherwise.

It was in 1815 that Owen first came into contact with practical politics, through an attempt to carry a Bill regulating the labour of children in factories. He wished to forbid completely the employment of children under ten in textile factories, and to allow not more than ten and a half hours a day of work for anyone under the age of eighteen. At first all went well. Owen secured the good will of the Government, provided he could obtain the support of Parliament. In Parliament he won many supporters. The Bill was put in charge of the elder Sir Robert Peel, who had carried in 1802 the only Factory Act then in force, that regulating the employment of pauper apprentices in cotton factories. But Sir Robert Peel was himself a manufacturer; he insisted upon consulting the others; the others began to organize opposition, and it became clear that the Bill could only be carried after a long fight, and then with many concessions.

Peel, after introducing a Bill on Owen's lines in 1815, allowed it to be postponed, and in 1816 contented himself with a committee of inquiry. Before this committee employers gave evidence of the beneficial effect of long hours on children's moral character. Fourteen hours a day spent in the mill made them obedient, industrious, and punctual; for their own sakes, nothing should be done to shorten their hours. Besides, it would be impossible to face foreign competition if the legislature interfered; the manufacturers would be ruined, and everybody would be

out of work. As against these witnesses, various medical men maintained that the long hours were injurious to health. Owen and Peel, alone among employers who gave evidence, were in favour of the Bill.

Nothing was done in 1817, because Peel was ill. In 1818, however, he re-introduced his Bill, somewhat modified in the hope of diminishing the employers' opposition; it passed the Commons, but was defeated in the Lords. Their Lordships succeeded in finding a number of medical men willing to swear that nothing is so good for the health of children as fifteen hours a day in factories. 'One well-known doctor even refused to commit himself to the statement that a child's health would be injured by standing for twenty-three out of the twenty-four hours.'¹

At last, in 1819, a Bill passed through both Houses. It was in many respects less satisfactory than that of 1815. It applied only to cotton, not to all textiles; it put the age limit at nine instead of ten; it allowed twelve hours of actual work, and thirteen and a half in the factory, including meal-times; instead of appointing inspectors, it left the business of inspection to magistrates and clergymen. Experience of the Act of 1802 had shown that magistrates and clergymen could be relied upon to neglect their duty, and the new Act, as was hoped, proved totally ineffective in consequence.

Owen, meanwhile, had embarked upon his first great scheme for regenerating the world. Considering that Socialism sprang from this scheme, it is amazing to find the extent to which, at first, Owen was favoured by the great. The Duke of Kent, Queen Victoria's father, remained his friend so long as he lived (he died in 1820). The Duke of York, the Archbishop of Canterbury, various Bishops and many Peers, listened to him with respect, both on account of his persuasive and conciliatory manner, and on account of his practical success at New Lanark. Bit by bit, as his honesty got the better of his tact, his fine friends fell away from him, but at first all the world was pre-disposed in his favour.

Owen's original proposals were made to a Select Committee in 1817, which was inquiring into the Poor Law. The Peace had brought wide-spread unemployment; as Owen said, 'on the day on which peace was signed the great customer of the producers died.' But apart from this temporary cause, machinery was more

¹ Hammond, *Town Labourer*, p. 167.

and more displacing human labour. There was an optimistic doctrine that the cheapness of machine-made goods so stimulated demand that as much labour could be employed as in the days of handicrafts. In so far as there was truth in this belief, it depended upon a continually expanding foreign market. In 1816 and 1817, however, the foreign market was not expanding: tariffs were being imposed on the Continent, and the South American market was as yet only very partially opened. In any case, as every one knows now, foreign markets cannot expand indefinitely. Owen was the first man who fully realized the problems raised by the productive power of machines. Peace, he says,

found Great Britain in possession of a new power in constant action, which, it may be safely stated, far exceeded the labour of one hundred millions of the most industrious human beings in the full strength of manhood. To give an instance of this power, there is machinery at work in one establishment in this country, aided by a population not exceeding 2,500 souls, which produces as much as the existing population of Scotland could manufacture after the mode in common practice fifty years ago! And Great Britain contains several such establishments! . . . Thus our country possessed, at the conclusion of the war, a productive power which operated to the same extent as if her population had been actually increased fifteen or twenty fold; and this had been chiefly created within the preceding twenty-five years.¹

He continues:

The war demand for the productions of labour having ceased, markets could no longer be found for them; and the revenues of the world were inadequate to purchase that which a power so enormous in its effects did produce: a diminished demand, consequently, followed. When, therefore, it became necessary to contract the sources of supply, it soon proved that mechanical power was much cheaper than human labour. The former, in consequence, was continued at work, whilst the latter was superseded; and human labour may now be obtained at a price far less than is absolutely necessary for the subsistence of the individual in ordinary comfort.²

¹ Cole, *Owen*, p. 177.

² *Ibid.*, p. 179

'The working classes,' he concludes, 'have now no adequate means of contending with mechanical power.' Since machinery cannot be discontinued, either millions must starve or 'advantageous occupation must be found for the poor and unemployed working classes, to whose labour mechanism must be rendered subservient, instead of being applied, as at present, to supersede it.'

This was, I think, the first time that any one had perceived our modern problem. To rail at machinery is useless, and yet, if the matter is left to the free play of the old economic forces, a mechanized world is one in which labour is impoverished and enslaved. This evil can only be prevented by deliberate planning, not by a policy of *laissez faire*. So Owen contended, in an economic situation which was like our own in miniature. The growth of foreign trade first, and then of economic imperialism, concealed the truth of his doctrine for a hundred years. At last time has proved that he perceived important laws of industrial development which were entirely overlooked by the orthodox economists of his day. Among the Radicals, Place defeated him in argument by means of the principle of population, and had in fact, on what was then known, a better case; but in the long run Owen's diagnosis has proved its validity.

Owen's cure was not so perspicacious as his analysis of the evil. At first, since he was presenting his Plan to a body which was inquiring into the Poor Law, he presented it mainly as a method of dealing with pauperism. His scheme was to collect the unemployed into villages, where they should co-operate in cultivating the soil, and also in manufacturing, though the bulk of their work should usually be agricultural. They were all to live in one large group of buildings, containing public reading rooms and a common kitchen, all meals being taken in common. All children over three years old were to live in a separate boarding house, and there was to be adequate provision for their education from the earliest age. All were to live in harmony and produce in common. The latest results of chemistry were to be utilized in making the agriculture scientific, but, like Kropotkin at a later date, Owen believed in intensive cultivation. On quite inadequate grounds he preferred the spade to the plough. While his factories were to be up to date and his manuring scientific, the actual tilling of the soil was to remain primitive.

Owen's Plan astonished and amused his contemporaries. Pea-

cock introduces him as 'Mr Toogood, the co-operationist, who will have neither fighting nor praying; but wants to parcel out the world into squares like a chess-board, with a community on each, raising everything for one another, with a great steam-engine to serve them in common for tailor and hosier, kitchen and cook.' When everybody is advancing a scheme to regenerate the world, Mr Toogood says: 'Build a grand co-operative parallelogram, with a steam-engine in the middle for a maid of all work.' Owen's 'parallelograms' were a general subject for laughter, and were not taken seriously except by a very few people. As a matter of fact, apart from all other difficulties, the financial obstacles were insuperable. He himself estimated the cost of starting an establishment for 1,200 men, women, and children at £96,000. True, once started it was to be self-supporting and to pay interest on the capital invested. But who was going to regenerate mankind at a cost of £80 per head? The thing might be tried experimentally on a small scale, but as a cure for the ills of the nation it was clearly out of the question.

Owen did not fail for lack of skill in securing the right kind of publicity. He formed a committee containing most of the important personages; he received encouragement from the Government; and he induced *The Times* and other leading newspapers to write in his praise and to insert articles by him. Whenever they did so, he purchased 30,000 copies for distribution—which may possibly have influenced them in his favour.

He did not claim originality for his Plan. He himself maintained that priority belonged to a writer named John Bellers, who published, in 1696, a pamphlet called *Proposals for raising A College of Industry of all useful Trades and Husbandry, etc.* It is probable that he also owed something to a community of Rappites in Pennsylvania. His enemies said that his ideas were much the same as those of Thomas Spence, who held that the land belonged to the people, and ought not to be left in private ownership. Thomas Spence, whether or not his ideas contributed to Owen's, is a man who deserved to be remembered. He was born in 1750, and died in 1814; from the year 1775 onwards, and throughout the worst period of the anti-Jacobin reaction, he continued to advocate the nationalization of the land, first in Newcastle, and then as a bookseller in Chancery Lane. He was led to his opinions by an incident which occurred in Newcastle in 1775. The Corporation enclosed and let part of the Town Moor, but the freemen brought an action claiming the rent, and

won. He published a book with the attractive title *Pig's Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*. His first paper, which he read to the Newcastle Philosophical Society, was called 'On the mode of administering the landed estates of the Nation as a Joint Stock property in Parochial Partnership by dividing the rent.' He was frequently in prison, and so were his followers, who called themselves 'Spencean philanthropists.' The Government accused them of plots, and suspended *Habeas Corpus* on account of them. Such an ancestry for Owen's ideas was not calculated to conciliate Archbishops. But it was not the bugbear of Spence that finally lost Owen his support in high places.

He had expounded his Plan at a public meeting on August 14, 1817, with complete confidence that it would soon be adopted throughout the whole world. He had much support, but there were some who rejected his schemes from the first. There were Radicals, including Cobbett, who regarded it as 'nothing short of a species of monkery.' Malthus objected to his scheme on grounds of population, though Ricardo was on the whole favourable. The poet Southey nosed out the insufficiency of religion in Owen's method of regenerating the world. As regards this last accusation, Owen decided that it would not be honest to keep silent. At a second meeting, on August 21st, he delivered a carefully prepared address, in the course of which he stated, with all possible emphasis, not only that he himself was not a Christian, but further that he regarded religion as the chief source of all human ills:

My friends, I tell you, that hitherto you have been prevented from even knowing what happiness really is, solely in consequence of the errors—gross errors—that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men. And, in consequence, they have made man the most inconsistent, and the most miserable being in existence. By the errors of these systems he has been made a weak, imbecile animal; a furious bigot and fanatic; or a miserable hypocrite; and should these qualities be carried, not only into the projected villages, but *into Paradise itself, a Paradise would be no longer found!* . . .

After this, naturally, Owen was dropped by the Archbishop and Bishops, the Dukes and Cabinet Ministers, *The Times* and the *Morning Post*. Among the great, only the Duke of Kent, and to a

lesser extent the Duke of Sussex, continued to stand up for him. The opponents of factory legislation in Parliament found their most telling argument against mercy to children in the fact that the champion of mercy was an infidel. Nothing daunted, Owen went on his way as if everything were succeeding perfectly, and set to work to try to obtain the capital required for starting at least one co-operative village. For the moment, however, nothing came of his efforts.

In the following year, being on the Continent, he presented a memorial to the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle. Here he had his one (not very fortunate) meeting with the Emperor Alexander:

He introduced himself to the Czar (Alexander I, elder brother of Owen's guest, the Grand Duke Nicholas) as the latter was leaving his hotel, and offered him a copy of the two Memorials. The Czar had no pocket big enough to hold the papers and refused to accept them at the moment, asking Owen to call on him that evening. The brusqueness of his tone offended Owen, and he refrained from accepting the invitation. Owen entrusted copies of his Memorial, however, to Lord Castlereagh, one of the British representatives at Aix-la-Chapelle, to present to the Congress, and he learnt afterwards from various sources that they were considered to be amongst the most important documents laid before the assembly.

He should have remembered that a well-dressed man, however devout he may become, does not care to spoil his clothes by filling the pockets with papers.

Owen gradually became aware that the Government would not take up his Plan, but he still had hopes of the local authorities. In 1820, he presented a long Report to the County of Lanark, explaining his ideas in considerable detail. The most important novelty in this Report is his proposal that Labour Notes should take the place of money. The Government was about to resume gold payments, which had been suspended in 1797 on account of the war; currency questions were therefore to the fore. According to Owen's proposal, all prices would be fixed in proportion to the labour involved in production, and all payments would be in labour units. 'The natural unit of value,' he says, 'is, in principle, human labour, or the combined manual and mental powers of men called into action.' To the adoption of this system he attributed almost magical powers.

As always after 1817, his hopes were "excessive, and his consciousness of obstacles almost non-existent. As he grew older, his sense of reality grew less, and the apocalyptic strain in his character became more and more prominent.

There is, however, a great deal that is true and important in the Report to the County of Lanark. It begins by stating that labour is the source of all wealth,¹ and it argues that there is no difficulty in producing enough, but only in finding a market. The markets are created by working-class demand, which depends upon wages; therefore to improve markets it is only necessary to raise wages. 'But the existing arrangements of Society will not permit the labourer to be remunerated for his industry, and in consequence all markets fail.' After expounding his labour-currency and his villages, he goes on to argue against excessive division of labour. Children are to have an all-round training, and adults are to combine agriculture with industrial work. Education, as always with Owen, is treated as the basis of all the rest. But the consequences aimed at are far-reaching. All will have enough, and therefore there will be no more wars, no more crimes, no more prisons; instead, there will be universal happiness.

The four years 1824 to 1828 were largely occupied in an experimental community on the lines of the co-operative parallelograms. George Rapp, a German religious reformer, had conducted to America a number of earnest Rappites, who founded a colony called Harmony, first in Pennsylvania, and later in Indiana. They renounced marriage and tobacco, with the result that they became prosperous. In 1824 they decided to move again, and early in 1825 they sold all that they owned in Indiana to Owen, who called the place New Harmony, and proceeded, after addressing the President and Congress in Washington, to organize such a community as he had dreamed of. Everything went wrong, as it generally does in such experiments. Owen lost £40,000, and emerged a poor man. His sons, however, who came to New Harmony with him, retained some of the land, and in the end became successful American citizens.

Oddly enough, there was just one respect in which New Harmony achieved success, and that an entirely surprising one. Owen imported from Europe a number of men of science, many of whom did valuable work. His own sons were in charge of the

¹ This, of course, is only partially true, as we have seen in connection with Ricardo.

United States Geological Survey, the headquarters of which was at New Harmony till 1856. Podmore, writing in 1906, says:

Thus, though Owen's great experiment failed, a quite unlooked-for success in another direction rewarded his efforts. New Harmony remained for more than a generation the chief scientific and educational centre in the West; and the influences which radiated from it have made themselves felt in many directions in the social and political structure of the country. Even to this day the impress of Robert Owen is clearly marked upon the town which he founded. New Harmony is not as other towns of the Western States. It is a town with a history. The dust of those broken hopes and ideals forms the soil in which the life of the present is rooted. The name of Owen is still borne in the town by several prominent citizens, descendants of the great Socialist. The town is proud in the possession of a public library—the librarian himself a grandson of one of the original colonists—of some fifteen thousand volumes, many of them scarce and valuable works.

After a meteoric career in the trade union movement (which will be considered in the next chapter, and which ended in 1834), Owen no longer had any intimate connection with working-class Radicalism. He became the leader of a small sect of free-thinkers, and was no longer, in the eyes of respectable people, 'the benevolent Mr Owen'; he was a dangerous character, inciting the populace to atheism and revolutionary activity. In 1835, he added to his unpopularity by proclaiming unorthodox views of marriage in a series of lectures published under the title: *Lectures on the Marriages of the Priesthood of the Old Immoral World*. The title is misleading; he means marriages celebrated by the priesthood. Owen was by this time a complete communist, and he objected to marriage as an institution connected with private property, and involving something like property in persons. He denounced not only marriage but the family environment for children, and that in very violent language. But he seems to have hoped that, in spite of liberty, there would still be many life-long unions.

Whether these views were a theoretical outcome of communism, as in Plato, or were suggested by some circumstance in his private life, I do not know. Mrs Owen died in 1831, and although he was frequently away from her for long periods,

there is no evidence that he ceased to feel affection for her. In the last year of her life she wrote to him:

Oh my dear husband, how much I feel the want of you to advise with in a time of so much anxiety. . . . I hope you will remember next Thursday, the day when we became *one*—thirty-one years ago, and I think from what I feel myself that we love one another as sincerely and understand one another much better than we did thirty-one years ago. My sincere wish is that nothing may ever happen to diminish this affection.

His enemies, though they denounced his doctrines, found nothing to say against his private life. Parallelograms, nursery schools, abolition of private property, and abolition of marriage form a logically consistent body of doctrine, and there is no reason to look for any other source of his views of morals.

In these gloomy days, there were only two people who were not shocked by Owen's wickedness; one was Lord Melbourne, and the other was—Queen Victoria. In spite of the business of the Dorchester Labourers,¹ Owen had remained on friendly terms with Melbourne, who presented him to the Queen in 1839. Owen never met anybody without presenting a document, so he gave his Sovereign 'an address from the Congress of the Delegates of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists, soliciting the Government to appoint parties to investigate measures which the Congress proposes to ameliorate the condition of Society.' History does not relate whether, in view of this alluring title, Her Majesty was graciously pleased to peruse the work.

No one ever found fault with Melbourne for his crimes, but for presenting to the Queen a notorious unbeliever he was severely hauled over the coals.² The Bishop of Exeter, in presenting a petition against Socialism from the personages of Birmingham, pointed out that Owen's organization was illegal, and that he could and should be put in prison.

There were other horrid blasphemies and immoralities, he added, with the recital of which he would not pain their Lordships' ears. There was a book by Owen which had been

¹ See next chapter.

² Melbourne himself was, apparently, a dogmatic unbeliever. See Greville, December 16, 1835.

put into the Bishop's hands—the reference is no doubt to the *Marriages of the Priesthood*—and one passage in that book had been placed before the episcopal eyes, but he had never since permitted his mind to be polluted by looking at it again. Some of the worst blasphemies and obscenities he could not bring himself to quote, not even to convince the noble Marquis (Normanby) of the necessity for prompt action—he could not and would not do it.

This, however, was not the worst. It appeared that at Queenwood (an Owenite community) music, dancing, and singing actually took place on the Sabbath! And this was the man whom the Prime Minister saw fit to present to his young and innocent Sovereign!

The episcopal oratory was vigorously followed up by lesser men throughout the country, with the result that Owenites were mobbed in the name of Christian charity. But nothing very drastic occurred, and the sect gradually sank into obscurity. How firmly the association of Socialism with free love became established in the minds of the well-to-do is shown in the answers of a clerical witness in 1846 before a Parliamentary Committee on railway construction. In connection with the morals of the navvies employed on the work, this clergyman was asked:

'You speak of infidel opinions. Do you believe that many of them are Socialists?'

'Most of them in practice,' he replied. 'Though they appear to have wives, very few of them are married.'¹

The Victorian delicacy of this answer is to be applauded, but there is no likelihood that the navvies were Socialists in any other sense. The Socialists of that period were few, earnest, and intellectual; the navvies were none of these.

To form a correct judgment of Owen's work and influence is far from easy. Down to 1815, he appears as a thoroughly practical man, successful in all that he undertakes, and not led by the impulses of a reformer into impossible undertakings. After this time, his vision is enlarged, but his every-day sagacity is diminished. In his attempts to transform the world he failed

¹ Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain*, Vol. I, p. 412.

through impatience, through failure to pay due attention to finance, and through the belief that everybody could easily and quickly be persuaded to see what appeared to him self-evident truth. His success at New Lanark misled him, as, at first, it misled others. He understood machines, and he knew how to make himself liked; these qualities sufficed at New Lanark, but not in his later ventures. He had not the qualities that make either a successful leader or a successful organizer.

As a man of ideas, however, he deserves a high place. He emphasized problems concerned with industrial production which time has shown to be important, though in the period immediately following that of his activity their importance was temporarily masked by the development of railways. He saw that the increased output due to machines must lead to over-production or under-employment, unless the market could be increased by a great increase of wages. He saw also that such an increase of wages was not likely to be brought about by economic forces under a reign of free competition. He deduced that some more socialized method of production and distribution was necessary if industrialism was to bring general prosperity. The nineteenth century, by continually finding new markets and new countries to exploit, succeeded in evading the logic of over-production, but in our day the truth of Owen's analysis is beginning to be obvious.

In his own day the most serious objections to his schemes were: the principle of population, and the necessity of competition as an incentive to industry. Malthus, who speaks of him as 'a man of real benevolence' and approves of his proposed Factory Act as well as of his methods of education, nevertheless advances both of these arguments. All systems of equality, he says, involve absence of 'those stimulants to exertion which can alone overcome the natural indolence of man,' while the prudential checks to population, which all depend upon private property, would be removed. 'As all would be equal, and in similar circumstances, there would be no reason whatever why one individual should think himself obliged to practice the duty of restraint more than another.—His [Owen's] absolute inability to suggest any mode of accomplishing this object [limiting population] that is not unnatural, immoral, or cruel in a high degree, together with the same want of success in every other person, ancient or modern, who has made a similar attempt, seem to show that the argument against systems of

equality founded on the principle of population does not admit of a plausible answer, even in theory.'

As for the validity of these two objections, the population argument has been answered by a fall in the birth-rate. By a curious irony it was mainly from some of the middle-class Radicals that the working classes ultimately learnt birth-control, which is essential to the possibility of successful Socialism, while Socialists have been mostly hostile or indifferent. The other argument has grown less serious owing to the increased productivity of labour. When the ordinary working day was from 12 to 15 hours, no doubt dread of destitution was a necessary incentive. But with modern methods, given proper organization, very few hours a day would suffice, and these could be secured by a discipline which would not be difficult to enforce.

Owen's villages, considered as a solution, were of course a trifle absurd. A communistic system cannot be adequately tried on a small scale; it must be extended at least over a whole nation, if not over the whole world. The villages were to combine agriculture and industry; each was to be as nearly as possible self-supporting in the matter of food. Such a scheme seemed natural in the industrial North in 1815, where isolated factories, worked by water-power, were established in rural districts; but in the modern world it is impossible for industrial districts to produce their own food. No small community, now-a-days, can aim at being economically self-contained, unless it is prepared to accept a very low standard of life.

In other respects, however, there is still a very great deal to be said for Owen's parallelograms. Unlike his contemporaries, he did not think of life in terms of profit and loss; he remembered beauty, the cultivation of the senses and the intellect, and, above all, children. In a communal life such as he planned, it is possible to have all the beauty of the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges; it is possible to have space, fine public rooms, freedom for children's work and play. All these things the family individualism to which we are accustomed makes impossible. It is only by combination that men who are not richer than any one should be can escape from squalor and enjoy the aesthetic delights belonging to spacious architecture and an abundance of air and sunshine. For children the modern urban world is a prison, unless they are poor enough to be allowed to play in the streets, and even then it is unhealthy and dangerous. Owen would have provided for important needs which are overlooked

in an individualistic and competitive world. He thought the transformation to the new society an easier and swifter matter than was possible, but the things he desired were good, they were neglected by almost all other reformers, and, with some technical adjustments, they were such as the growth of machine production has made more practicable, not less. For these reasons, in spite of his limitations, he is important, and his ideas are still capable of bearing fruit.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Early Trade Unionism

WHOEVER has a commodity to sell is likely to obtain a better price if he possesses a monopoly than if he is subject to competition. If he has competitors, it is usually to his interest to combine with them, so that he and they may jointly secure the advantages of monopoly. It is, however, often very difficult to secure such combinations, since those who have been competitors are apt to be suspicious of each other, and any one among them, after combination has been agreed upon, can obtain a temporary gain by breaking away and negotiating independently with purchasers. Moreover purchasers, being aware of the loss that they are likely to suffer from agreement among sellers, put every possible obstacle of law and public opinion in the way of such agreement. Accordingly the benefits of competition are urged by consumers, and the benefits of combination by producers. The conflict between these two opposed points of view, and the general doctrines as to the public good to which they give rise, runs through the economic history of the nineteenth century.

Labour, considered as a commodity, is sold by wage-earners and bought by capitalists. Given an increasing population and free competition among wage-earners, wages must tend to fall to subsistence level. Trade unions are, at least in their origin, an attempt to prevent this result by combination among the sellers of labour—at first only in particular crafts, but gradually over a widening area, embracing at last, in Great Britain, an overwhelming majority of industrial wage-earners. There can be no question that the economic bargaining power of wage-earners, and the general status of labour, have been immensely enhanced by trade unionism, but the early steps were difficult, and early excessive hopes were repeatedly disappointed.

The earliest trade unions, according to Mr and Mrs Sidney Webb, date from the late seventeenth century, and thus began a hundred years before the era of machine production, but it was

only at the time of the industrial revolution that trade unionism began to be important. 'In all cases in which Trade Unions arose, the great bulk of the workers had ceased to be independent producers, themselves controlling the processes, and owning the materials and the products of their labour, and had passed into the condition of lifelong wage-earners, possessing neither the instruments of production nor the commodity in its finished state.'¹ In some trades, for instance tailoring, this reduction of the worker to the condition of proletarian was prior to the machine age, but it was only through machinery and the factory system that the conditions for the existence of trade unionism began to exist on a large scale. For this reason, they were important in Great Britain at a much earlier date than elsewhere.

In the eighteenth century trade unions were not sufficiently important to attract much hostile notice from the law, but from 1799 to 1913 they were subjected to legal persecution, first by the legislature and the law-courts in combination, and afterwards by the law-courts in defiance of the intentions of the legislature. An Act proposed by Pitt and hurried through Parliament in 1799 made all combinations of workmen illegal. In theory, combinations of employers were also illegal; but this part of the law remained a dead letter. Other statutes, as well as the common law, were invoked when more convenient. In 1812, in a cotton-weavers' strike, the committee were arrested for the common-law crime of combination, and sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from four to eighteen months. In 1818, the leaders in a cotton-spinners' strike were sentenced to two years under a statute of 1305 entitled 'Who be Conspirators and who be Champertors.' Prosecutions were frequent, even when no strike was in progress. 'The first twenty years of the nineteenth century,' say the Webbs, 'witnessed a legal persecution of Trade Unionists as rebels and revolutionaries—thwarting the healthy growth of the Unions, and driving their members into violence and sedition.'

A new phase of Trade Unionism begins in 1824, owing to the intervention of middle-class Radicals. Until this time, the movement had been a spontaneous growth, ignored or disliked by all outside the ranks of wage-earners. A prosecution of the compositors of *The Times* in 1810 drew the attention of Francis Place, the Radical tailor, to the iniquity of the Combination

¹ *The History of Trade Unionism*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Revised Edition, 1920, pp. 25-6.

Acts, and when, in the early twenties, the tone of British politics began to be less virulently reactionary, he secured in favour of their repeal the support of two Philosophical Radicals, McCulloch and Joseph Hume. In the year 1824, Hume succeeded in getting through Parliament a measure securing complete freedom of combination. In those days not even the Government paid much attention to business, and Hume, by keeping quiet, succeeded in preventing not only Members of Parliament, but also Ministers, from noticing what was happening.¹ There was a great outbreak of strikes, and people were surprised to find that the old laws were no longer in force. In the next year, 1825, Parliament re-enacted some of the provisions which it had unintentionally repealed, but it did not go so far as to make strikes and trade unions illegal. From this time onwards, trade unionism, though with many ups and downs, was important both in industry and in politics.

So long as the trade unions were free from middle-class influences, they had no large aims either political or economic, nor had they much sense of working-class solidarity. They consisted of local combinations, mostly of skilled craftsmen in some particular craft, sometimes co-operating with similar combinations elsewhere, but seldom concerned with anything beyond the maintenance of their own rate of wages. Some of their leaders, however, after having come into contact with Philosophical Radicalism in connection with the repeal of the Combination Laws, became aware of the existence of another doctrine, which offered more to wage-earners than the cold comfort of Malthusian self-restraint and economy with a view to emigration. Socialism was being preached, not only by Owen, but by several economists, of whom the most important was Thomas Hodgskin, a man who enjoys the rare distinction of being quoted with respect by Marx. Hodgskin taught, following Ricardo, that labour is the source of value, and, not following Ricardo, that labour should receive the whole produce of industry. The result of his activities terrified James Mill, who on October 25, 1831, wrote in great anxiety to Place about a deputation 'from the working classes' who had been preaching communism to Mr Black, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*.

Their notions about property look ugly; they not only desire that it should have nothing to do with representation, which

¹ See Wallas's *Life of Francis Place*, Chap. VIII.

is true, though not a truth for the present time, as they ought to see, but they seem to think that it should not exist, and that the existence of it is an evil to them. Rascals, I have no doubt, are at work among them. Black, it is true, is easily imposed upon. But the thing needs looking into. Nobody has such means of probing the ulcer as you, and nobody has so much the means of cure. The fools, not to see that what they madly desire would be such a calamity to them as no hands but their own could bring upon them.

Place answered:

My dear Mill,—As you sometimes take pains to serve the common people, and as you are an influential man, I send you an essay in reply to your note. The men who called on Black were not a deputation from the working people, but two out of half-a-dozen who manage, or mismanage, the meetings of the Rotunda in Blackfriars Road, and at the Philadelphian Chapel in Finsbury. The doctrine they are now preaching is that promulgated by Hodgskin in a tract in 1825, entitled *Labour defended against the Claims of Capital*, . . .

and so on through a long letter.¹

A year later Mill passed on Place's information to Brougham:

The nonsense to which your Lordship alludes about the rights of the labourer to the whole produce of the country, wages, profits, and rent, all included, is the mad nonsense of our friend Hodgkin [sic] which he has published as a system, and propagates with the zeal of perfect fanaticism. Whatever of it appears in the *Chronicle* steals in through his means, he being a sort of sub-editor, and Black (the editor) not very sharp in detecting; but all Black's opinions on the subject of Property are sound. These opinions, if they were to spread, would be the subversion of civilized society; worse than the overwhelming deluge of Huns and Tartars.²

The result of Socialist teaching was a revolt against middle-class Radicalism, and the rapid growth of a purely working-

¹ Wallas, *Place*, p. 274.

² Mill to Brougham, in Bain's *James Mill*, p. 364.

"

class movement, partly trade unionist and partly co-operative, which, to a great extent, looked upon Owen as its prophet. While he was busy with New Harmony, the co-operative movement began, in close connection with Owen's doctrines. The first known use of the word 'Socialist,' as applied to Owen's followers, occurs at this time, in *The Co-operative Magazine* for 1827, in which the advocates of Owen's villages are spoken of as 'the Communists and Socialists.'¹ As the capital required for founding villages was not forthcoming, the co-operative movement was led to develop in more practical ways. The present immense growth of co-operative stores is the outcome of a development which starts from Owen; but before reaching its ultimate highly practical form it went through various vicissitudes and tried a number of unsuccessful experiments.

In September 1832, Owen opened the 'National Equitable Labour Exchange' in rather magnificent premises in Gray's Inn Road, which had been used by a disciple of his, named Bromley, as an 'Institution for Removing Ignorance and Poverty.' Here goods were to be bought and sold, not for money, but for labour notes, which more or less purported to represent their cost in labour. An immense business was done, but no one quite knew whether it was done at a profit or at a loss. Bromley began to demand that Owen should pay a large rent (not in labour notes); the result was that Owen moved to new premises, and in July 1833 he ceased to be connected with the enterprise. There were other Labour Exchanges, conducted on similar principles, mostly in London. And in connection with them there was formed a 'United Trades Association,' where work was given to the unemployed, who were paid in labour notes, and whose produce was sent to the Labour Exchange. The whole movement, however, quickly came to grief. William Lovett, later a Chartist leader, an Owenite closely connected with the United Trades Association, attributed the failure to 'religious differences, the want of legal security, and the dislike which the women had to confine their dealings to one shop.' Owen's inability to keep religious questions in the background is constantly surprising.

The trade union movement was, for a short time, intimately connected with these early abortive attempts at co-operation. Although some trade unions held aloof, most, in 1833, accepted Owen's gospel, and under his leadership there was a large sudden

¹ Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain*, Vol. I, p. 315.

growth of membership and an attempt to realize wide socialistic aims.

As always, he expected quick results. He thought that the trade union movement could transform the whole economic system within a few years. To the Operative Builders' Union, which had written to him, he replied: 'You may accomplish this change (to the new age of co-operation) for the whole population of the British Empire in less than five years, and essentially ameliorate the condition of the producing classes throughout Great Britain and Ireland in less than five months.'¹ The builders formed a 'National Building Guild of Brothers.' They were prepared to undertake building contracts themselves; employers were informed that their power was ending, but that they could be admitted to the Guild as managers on proof of competence; meanwhile, the operative builders demanded higher wages. The employers showed no enthusiasm for the Owenite millennium, and refused to employ members of the union. There was a strike, and the strikers set out to build a Guildhall for themselves at Birmingham. However, funds gave out before the building was finished, and the whole enterprise collapsed. But meanwhile it had become absorbed in a still wider movement.

In October 1833, delegates from trade unions all over the country met at the National Equitable Labour Exchange, and recommended the formation of a 'Grand National Moral Union of the Productive and Useful Classes.' Within a few weeks it had half a million members, and the total number of trade unionists was estimated at a million. While some unions had their doubts about Owen, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union was completely devoted to his doctrine. His optimism and the rapid increase of membership seem to have made the unionists rash; everywhere there were strikes, employers became alarmed, unionists were refused employment, with the result that there were no funds.

At this moment came the case of the Dorchester Labourers. These were six men who had been engaged in forming a lodge of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers, which was not in itself illegal; but they had administered oaths, and on this ground were sentenced to seven years' transportation. Owen and the other leaders had to devote their energies to agitation on behalf of these unfortunate men. Everything possible was done, but Melbourne, the Home Secretary, was adamant.

¹ Cole, *Owen*, p. 271.

The affairs of the Consolidated Union were now in a bad way, and Owen's quarrels with his lieutenants, primarily about religion, completed the collapse. His chief coadjutor, J. E. Smith, got tired of Socialism, and founded the Universalist religion, after which episode, he lived a quiet and prosperous life as editor of the *Family Herald*. Amid personal and financial troubles, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union came to a painful end. Owen, abandoning his hopes of it, persuaded such of his followers as remained faithful to follow him into a new organization, The British and Foreign Consolidated Association of Industry, Humanity, and Knowledge, and trade unionism, for a time, passed into obscurity. Working-class fervour was diverted first into purely political channels by the Chartists, and then, after the foundation of the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844, into the second co-operative movement, which still looked to Owen as a prophet, but pursued more practicable means towards a less revolutionary end. By 1848, say the Webbs,

The danger of revolution had passed away. A new generation of workmen was growing up, to whom the worst of the old oppression was unknown, and who had imbibed the economic and political philosophy of the middle class reformers. Bentham, Ricardo, and Grote were read only by a few; but the activity of such educationalists as Lord Brougham and Charles Knight propagated 'useful knowledge' to all the members of the Mechanics' Institutes and the readers of the *Penny Magazine*. The middle-class ideas of 'free enterprise' and 'unrestricted competition' which were thus diffused received a great impetus from the extraordinary propaganda of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and the general progress of Free Trade.

The fiasco of Owenite trade unionism, combined with the universal increase of prosperity from the forties to the eighties, when the Manchester School controlled British economic policy, turned even working-class leaders into individualist Radicals. Nevertheless trade unionism, after a great collapse (the Webbs estimate that in 1840 there were not 100,000 trade unionists in the kingdom), grew steadily, and spread to all industrial countries. In Great Britain it succeeded in meeting the periodical hostility of the judges by periodical fresh legislation. When, in the eighties, bad times came again, and wages began to fall, the trade unions remembered Owen and renewed their Socialist

faith. Hyndman, in 1885, praised 'noble Robert Owen' for perceiving the uselessness of half-measures. 'But the revolution which in his day was unprepared is now ripe and ready . . . The great social revolution of the nineteenth century is at hand.'¹ The revolution did not come in 1885, any more than in 1834. But the later Socialists found useful work to do. Owen, for a moment, had enlisted unskilled workers in his unions, but had led them only to starvation, prison, and exile. In the late 80s, when trade unionism once again reached the unskilled, it led to a series of dramatically successful strikes. And while national Socialism proved impracticable, much useful work was achieved in the way of municipal Socialism.

Trade revived, and Socialism decayed. Now trade has again decayed and Socialism has again revived. Perhaps this is not the last turn of the cycle, but the last turn must come.

¹ Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Marx and Engels

SOCIALISM, unlike the creed of the Philosophical Radicals, did not quickly become a powerful force in practical politics, but remained, broadly speaking, the ineffective creed of a minority until 1917. As a system of thought, however, it belongs to the same period as Ricardo and James Mill. After the failure of Robert Owen, the Socialist movement, for a time, became mainly French, and was adapted to pre-industrial conditions. The doctrines of Saint Simon and Fourier had considerable influence, and the Socialists were sufficiently powerful to dominate the beginnings of the Revolution of 1848. French Socialism of that period, however, had still some of the defects of Owenism, as well as others peculiar to itself. It had not a consistent body of doctrine, or a practicable scheme for the transition from capitalistic to socialized production.

It was only with Marx and Engels that Socialism reached intellectual maturity, and became capable of inspiring a serious political party. The Communist Manifesto, which already contained all the essentials of their doctrine, was published just before the outbreak of the French Revolution of 1848. Mentally, it is to this period that Marx's system belongs.

To understand Marx, it is necessary to take account of the extremely complex influences by which he was moulded. The first influence was that of Hegel, which Marx encountered during his university career and never shook off, and of which elements remain in Communism to the present day. From Hegel came the love of an all-embracing system, and the belief that history is the orderly working out of an intellectual scheme, with the same inevitability and the sham sharpness of logical opposition as in the Hegelian dialectic. Marx's next experience was as a German Radical journalist subject to all the difficulties of the censorship as it then existed. After this, his desire for knowledge brought him into contact with French Socialism, and from the French he learnt to regard revolution as the normal method

of political advance. But it was Engels who first contributed to their joint work the all-important element of first-hand knowledge concerning British industrialism. Engels published in 1845 his book on *The Condition of the English working class in 1844*, and the impress of this gloomy period is stamped on everything that Marx and Engels subsequently wrote. But for contact with England, Marx might have remained unduly abstract and metaphysical, and lacking in that intimate knowledge of industrial facts from which so much of his persuasive power is derived. By the time his doctrine was completed, it combined elements of value from three countries. Germany made him a system-builder, France made him a revolutionary, and England made him learned.

Marx was born in 1818, at Treves in the Rhineland, where French influence had penetrated more deeply than in most parts of Germany.¹ His ancestors, for generations, had been rabbis, but his father was a lawyer. On the death of the father's mother, which occurred when Marx was six years old, the family became Christian, and Marx was educated as a Protestant. When he was only seventeen, he fell in love with a beautiful and aristocratic girl, and persuaded both his parents and hers to permit an engagement. It was, however, seven years before he was able to marry her, and by that time her parents had become strongly opposed to the match.

As a university student he showed already that titanic but somewhat ill-directed energy which characterized him through life. In a long letter to his father, written at the age of nineteen, he tells how he had written three volumes of poems to his Jenny, translated large parts of Tacitus and Ovid, and two books on the *Pandects*, written a work of three hundred pages on the philosophy of law, perceived that it was worthless, written a play, and 'while out of sorts, got to know Hegel from beginning to end,' besides reading innumerable books on the most diverse subjects.

Hegel had died in 1831, and his influence in Germany was still very great. But his school had broken into two sects, the Old and Young Hegelians, and in 1839 his system was destructively criticized by Feuerbach, who reverted from Hegel's Absolute Idealism to a form of materialism, and carried with him many of the Young Hegelians, who were distinguished from the Old by

¹ In relation to Marx's life I have relied in the main upon *Karl Marx: His Life and Work*, by Otto Rühle (Allen & Unwin Ltd.).

their Radicalism. In academic Germany, especially among the young, it was a time of very intense intellectual activity. While Germany, from the standpoint of learning, was ahead of the rest of the world, it was politically and economically far behind both France and England. The censorship was preposterous, and the middle classes had no political power. It resulted inevitably that the intelligent young were radical if not revolutionary, and that they were very open to political ideas coming from abroad, especially from France. Marx in his youth was not isolated, but was one of a group of eager young men, all persuaded that philosophy is the key to everything, but all choosing the philosophy that best lent itself to Radical politics.

Marx first sought a career in journalism. In 1842 he became a contributor, and soon afterwards the editor, of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and now he first became aware of problems for which nothing in academic philosophy offered any solution. The first of such problems that came to his attention was the question of a law for the imprisonment of the poor for stealing wood from the forest. He realized that economic questions had been unduly neglected, and was confirmed in this by reading a book on French Socialism. When the *Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed by the censorship in January 1843, Marx had leisure for study, and decided to become acquainted with Socialism.

With this end in view he went to Paris, as Socialism at that time was predominantly French. English Socialism, under the leadership of Robert Owen, had become mainly secularist and anti-Christian. Owen, as we have seen, had always been opposed to political methods, and radical politics in England was left to the Chartists, whose programme did not directly concern itself with economic questions. In France, on the contrary, the movement inaugurated by Saint Simon and Fourier had continued and was full of vigour. Marx made the acquaintance of the leaders, of whom the most important were Proudhon and Louis Blanc. He learnt what there was to know about Socialism, but did not make friends with any of the French Socialists. It must be said that Socialism before Marx was not worthy of any great degree of intellectual respect. Saint Simon was essentially a mediaevalist who disliked industrialism and the modern world, and sought renovation in a purified Christianity. Fourier, though he had merit as a critic of the existing economic system, became completely fantastic when he advanced schemes for a better organization of production. Their importance lay in the fact that they

caused a certain number of intellectuals to feel dissatisfaction with capitalism, and to look out for ways of ending it or at least greatly mitigating its evils. In France, such men had succeeded in creating a labour movement neither purely political, like the Chartists, nor purely economic, like the trade unions, but both at once. It was realized that political means, such as manhood suffrage, were necessary, but they were to be used for the achievement of economic objects of importance to the proletariat. This conception of the relation of politics to economics Marx learnt in France and retained through life.

The belief in an intimate relation between philosophy and politics, which Marx, in common with all his circle, accepted as axiomatic in his student years, remained part of his creed. 'Philosophy,' he says at this time, 'cannot be realized without the uprising of the proletariat; and the proletariat cannot rise without the realization of philosophy.' To English-speaking people, who do not take philosophy seriously, this must seem an odd sentiment, unless they have learnt to accept the Communist creed. To Marx at that rate, it would seem, the realization of philosophy was as important as the rising of the proletariat. He was, in fact, well on the way towards the theory that all philosophy is an expression of economic circumstances.

His friendship with Engels began at this time, in Paris, in the year 1844. Engels was two years younger than Marx, and had been subjected to the same intellectual influences in his university years. But his father was a cotton spinner with factories both in Germany and in Manchester, and Engels had been sent to Manchester to work in the family business. This had given him first-hand knowledge of up-to-date industrialism, and of English factory conditions at a very bad period. He was at this time writing his book on the condition of the English working class. This book uses powerfully the same kind of material that Marx afterwards used in the first volume of *Capital*. It is concrete, full of facts from official sources, gloomy as to the present but hopeful of a proletarian revolution in the near future. It makes it possible to judge of the importance to be attached to Engels in the joint work of the two men. Marx had been, until he met Engels, too academic. There were evils on the Continent, perhaps as great as those in England, but they were less modern, and less appropriate in an indictment of capitalism. Engels invariably minimized his share in all that the two men did together, but undoubtedly it was very great. And above all he

first directed the attention of Marx to the kind of facts best calculated to win assent to his economic theory. The materialistic conception of history appears to have been, at least in its main outlines, discovered independently by the two men before their collaboration began.

Engels was already a Communist when he first met Marx, having been converted by a man named Moses Hess, who was prominent among the German radicals. Hess, writing in 1843, said:

'Last year, when I was about to start for Paris, Engels came to see me on his way from Berlin. We discussed the questions of the day, and he, a revolutionist of the Year One, parted from me a convinced Communist. Thus did I spread devastation.'

It is interesting to note that at this time Marx made friends with Heine, who much admired him and became a Communist. The Continental intellectuals of that day were far more advanced politically than those in England, no doubt because the middle classes had less power, and because revolution was the obvious first step in progress. The views held by Marx and his friends before 1848, while Metternich still ruled, would bring down worse persecution upon their holders now than they did then.

In January 1845, at the request of the Prussian Government, Marx was expelled from Paris, and therefore went to Brussels. It was at this time that he first profited by the pecuniary generosity of Engels, which remained his chief financial resource down to the day of his death. From Brussels, with the help of Engels, Marx conducted Communist propaganda, and came in touch with various bodies such as The Workers' Educational Society, The Federation of the Just, The Democratic League, and The Fraternal Democrats. The Federation of the Just, which met in Great Windmill Street in London, developed into the Communist League, which included in its programme, 'the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the dominion of the proletariat, the abolition of a class society, and the introduction of an economic and social order without private property and without classes.' In December 1847, this body decided that Marx and Engels should draw up a statement of its aims. The whole importance of the Communist League in history is due to this decision, since its outcome was the Communist Manifesto.

The Communist Manifesto, as regards style, vividness, compression, and propagandist force, is the best thing that Marx

ever did. It has the buoyancy and swiftness characteristic of the eve of a revolution; it has the clarity due to a newly-won theoretical insight. It opens with the words:

'A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police spies.'

It ends:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and their aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

'Working men of all countries, unite!'

The remainder consists of a history of the world, beginning 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,' showing what a fierce revolution has been effected by modern capitalism, and leading on, apparently with the inevitability of a syllogism, to the next stage in world history, the proletarian revolution.

I do not know of any other document of equal propagandist force. And this force is derived from intense passion intellectually clothed as inexorable exposition.

It was the Communist Manifesto that gave Marx his position in the Socialist movement, and he would have deserved it even if he had never written *Das Kapital*.

Scarcely was the Manifesto finished when the Revolution broke out in Paris. The Provisional Government, which was largely Socialist, invited Marx to Paris, and he went. But he stayed there only a month: at the end of that time, the revolution having spread to Germany, he naturally wished to be active in his own country.

Few movements in history have disappointed all participants more completely than the revolutions of 1848. For milder revolutionaries, the disappointment was only temporary, but for Marx it was life-long.

He was expelled from Prussia in May, 1849, and never received permission to return, though in fact he returned a few times surreptitiously for brief periods. His activities in Germany had been purely journalistic, and milder than might have been expected; they were, however, such as the reaction could not

tolerate. From Germany he went to Paris, from which he was expelled after a month. The only remaining refuge was England, the 'Mother of the Exiles', as it was then called. In England, with brief intervals, he lived for the rest of his life, no longer attempting to stir up revolution in his own day, but providing the mental stimulus to revolution at some indefinite future date.

Marx's life is sharply divided into two periods by the failure of the 1848 revolutions, which deprived him of immediate hopefulness and turned him into an impoverished exile. If his belief in the ultimate victory of Communism had had a less firm intellectual foundation, he could hardly have persisted, as he did, in the laborious preparation of a monumental work, with little encouragement except from a few friends and disciples. His tenacity and industry throughout his later life are truly astonishing.

So far as private circumstances went, his life was like Mr Micawber's, an affair of duns, pawnbrokers, disputes about dishonoured bills, and so on. The whole family lived in two small rooms in Dean Street, Soho. When, in 1852, one child died in infancy, Mrs Marx wrote:

'Our poor little Francisca fell ill with severe bronchitis. For three days the poor child struggled with death. She suffered so terribly. When it was over, her little body rested in the small back room, and we all came into the front room. At night, we lay down on the floor. The three other children were with us, and we wept at the loss of the little angel. . . . The dear child's death happened at a time when we were in the direst need. Our German friends were unable to help us. . . . Ernest Jones, who paid us a visit at this time, and had promised to help, was unable to do anything. . . . In my overwhelming need, I hastened to a French refugee who lived in the neighbourhood, and had visited us not long before. At once, in the most friendly way possible, he gave me two pounds. With this sum I was able to buy the coffin in which my poor child now lies at peace. She had no cradle when she came into the world, and for a long time it was difficult to find a box for her last resting place.'

Engels, who continued to work in the family business at Manchester, devoted every penny that he could spare to the support of Marx. But Engels, naturally, was not on good terms with his father, who was a pious Calvinist; the sums available were therefore not very large. They were augmented by journalism, chiefly in America, but the income obtained in this

way was small and precarious. Marx's only son died at the age of nine; 'the house is desolate and orphaned since the death of the poor child, who was its living soul,' he wrote to Engels. He was always lovable in his dealings with children: those of the neighbourhood called him 'Daddy Marx', and looked to him for sweets, not in vain. With children he was free from rivalry and fear of inferiority, which made him irritable and quarrelsome with adults. On October 28, 1933, the *New Statesman and Nation* published the following letter:

Maiden Towers.

3. 7. 1865.

Dear Miss Lilliput,

You must excuse the belated character of my answer. I belong to that sort of people who always look twice at things before they decide one way or the other. Thus, I was rather startled at receiving an invitation on the part of a female minx quite unknown to me. However, having ascertained your respectability and the high tone of your transactions with your tradespeople, I shall feel happy to seize this rather strange opportunity of getting at your eatables and drinkables. Suffering somewhat from an attack of rheumatism, I hope you keep your reception room clear of anything like draft. As to the ventilation required, I shall provide it for myself. Being somewhat deaf in the right ear, please put a dull fellow, of whom I dare say your company will not be in want of, at my right side. For the left I hope you will reserve your female beauty, I mean the best looking female among your guests.

I am somewhat given to tobacco chewing, so have the stuff ready. Having former intercourse with Yankees taken to the habitude of spitting, I hope spittoons will not be missing. Being rather easy in my manners and disgusted at the hot and close English atmosphere, you must prepare for seeing me in a dress rather adamatic. I hope your female guests are somewhat in the same line.

Addio, my dear unknown little minx,

Yours for ever,
Dr Crankley.

Readers were challenged to guess the authorship, but nobody guessed correctly; it was in fact written by Marx to his daughter.

His letters to Engels are a monotonous list of lamentations. He was ill, his wife was ill, his children were ill; the butcher and baker wished to be paid; his mother would do nothing further for him. He came to take Engels's help as a matter of course, and to pour out the catalogue of his troubles even at the most inappropriate moments. Engels lived in a free union with an Irish girl who was devoted to him, and whose sudden death was a great blow to him. In reply to the letter announcing his loss, Marx writes:

Dear Engels: The news of Mary's death has both astonished and dismayed me. She was extremely good-natured, witty, and much attached to you. The devil knows that there is nothing but trouble now in our circles. I myself can no longer tell whether I am on my head or my heels. My attempts to raise some money in France and Germany have failed, and it is only to be expected that £15 would not hold off the avalanche more than a week or two. Apart from the fact that no one will give us credit any more, except the butcher and the baker (and they only to the end of this week), I am harried for school expenses, for rent, and by the whole pack. The few of them to whom I have paid a little on account, have pouched it in a twinkling, to fall upon me with redoubled violence. Furthermore, the children have no clothes or shoes in which to go out. In a word, there is hell to pay. . . . We shall hardly be able to keep going for another fortnight. It is abominably selfish of me to retail all these horrors to you at such a moment. But the remedy is homoeopathic. One evil will help to cancel the other.¹

Financial troubles continued to beset Marx until 1869, when Engels (whose father was now dead) sold out his interest in the business, paid Marx's debts (£210), gave him a settled income of £350 a year, and himself came to live in London, with freedom at last to give all his time to Socialist work.

Throughout, Marx worked in the British Museum. In 1859 he published his *Critique of Political Economy*, in 1867 the first volume of *Capital*. The second and third were published by Engels after his death. Pawnbrokers, family troubles, illnesses, and deaths failed to distract him from the composition of his *magnum opus*.

Apart from his writing, Marx's only important work after 1849 was in connection with the International Working Men's Association, the 'First International.' This organization, in which Marx

¹ Otto Rühle, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

was the leading spirit, was founded in London in 1864, and was the basis for the subsequent international Socialist movement. But although it contained the germ of great things, it did not itself achieve any great measure of success. In England the trade unions, after some hesitation, held aloof with few exceptions. In Germany, the General Union of German Workers, the organization founded by Lassalle, was antagonized by Marx's jealousy both of Lassalle and of his successor, Schweitzer, whom he falsely accused of working with Bismarck. In Switzerland and the Latin countries, the influence of Bakunin led to the spread of Anarchist Communism, which differed from Marxism as to the use of political action and the function of the State. Bakunin and his followers, it is true, ultimately joined the International and tried to dominate it, but their quarrel with Marx brought about its disruption in 1872.

Marx was at no time tolerant of rivals. Speaking of the time just before 1848, Rühle says:

The intolerant way in which the purging of the communist ranks was effected and in which the cleavage in the communist camp was brought about, was not the outcome of unavoidable necessity, not dependent upon the progress of economic evolution. Its primary cause was Marx's craving for exclusive personal predominance, which he rationalized into a fanatical confidence in the conquering power of his own idea.'

In this respect, he did not improve with age. Of all his enemies, the attack on Bakunin was the most envenomed and the most unscrupulous. Bakunin was a Russian aristocrat who threw in his lot with the German revolution of 1848, with the result that he was condemned to death in Saxony in 1849, handed over to the Austrians, who again condemned him to death, passed on by them to Tsar Nicholas, who shut him up in Peter and Paul and afterwards sent him to Siberia, whence he escaped in 1861, finally reaching London by way of Japan and America. Marx, as early as 1848, accused him in print of being a spy, and, although the accusation was then proved to be baseless, repeated it in subsequent years on appropriate occasions. When Bakunin, after twelve years of prison and penal settlement, endeavoured to resume his connection with former revolutionary comrades, he found himself treated with suspicion, and at last discovered that Marx was the source of the trouble. Instead of showing resentment, he wrote a friendly letter to Marx, which led to an interview in which he persuaded him of his revolutionary

integrity. For a moment, Marx was mollified. He wrote to Engels: 'I saw him yesterday evening once more, for the first time after sixteen years. I must say that I liked him very much, much better than before. . . . On the whole he is one of the very few persons whom I find not to have retrogressed after sixteen years, but to have developed further.'

Friendship between these two men could not, however, be of long duration. Bakunin was the apostle of Anarchist Communism, as Marx was of political Communism; Marx hated Slavs, Bakunin hated Jews. There were both personal and impersonal reasons which made co-operation impossible. So far as Bakunin is concerned, the personal reasons would not have sufficed to produce an estrangement. After reading *Capital* he wrote: 'For five and twenty years Marx has served the cause of socialism ably, energetically, and loyally, taking the lead of everyone in this matter. I should never forgive myself if, out of personal motives, I were to destroy or diminish Marx's beneficial influence. Still, I may be involved in a struggle against him, not because he has wounded me personally, but because of the State socialism he advocates.'

Bakunin joined the International in 1868, and set to work to bring it over to his views. He and Marx fought a fierce fight, in which Marx and his followers proved themselves far from scrupulous. The spy accusation was revived; Bakunin was said to have embezzled 25,000 francs. At the Congress at The Hague, in 1872, where Marx had a majority, it was decided to expel Bakunin on the ground that he had 'resorted to fraudulent manoeuvres in order to possess himself of other people's property.' But it was a barren victory. By the next year, the International was dead.

Both sections, Socialists and Anarchists, survived the end of the International, but while the Socialist movement prospered, the Anarchists remained always politically insignificant. In Russia, Bakunin had a successor in many ways superior to himself, namely Kropotkin, who lived to see the Marxists gain control of the Russian State. Elsewhere, except in Spain, Bakunin's following died out. Whatever may be thought of Marx's methods, there can be no doubt that his programme was more practicable than his rival's, and based upon a sounder estimate of human nature.

With the end of the First International in 1873, Marx's part in public affairs came to an end.

Marx was the first intellectually eminent economist to consider

the facts of economics from the standpoint of the proletariat. The orthodox economists believed that they were creating an impersonal science, as free from bias as mathematics; Marx, however, had no difficulty in proving that their capitalist bias led them into frequent errors and inconsistencies. The whole of economics, he maintained, took on a completely different aspect when viewed from the wage-earner's point of view. His devotion to the interests of the proletariat is perhaps somewhat surprising, in view of his bourgeois origin and his academic education. He had all his life a love of domination associated with a feeling of inferiority, which made him prickly with social superiors, ruthless with rivals, and kind to children. It was probably this trait in his character that first led him to become the champion of the oppressed. It is difficult to say what caused his feeling of inferiority, but perhaps it was connected with his being a Jew by race and a Christian by education. He may, on this account, have had to endure the contempt of school-fellows in his early years, without being able to fall back upon the inner self-assurance that would be possible to a Jew by religion. Anti-semitism is an abomination, but it has one incidental good effect: that it has raised up, among Jews, tribunes of the people who might otherwise have been supporters of the *status quo*. If this view is just, Marxism is a suitable punishment for the illiberality of well-to-do anti-semites.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Dialectical Materialism

THE contributions of Marx and Engels to theory were twofold: there was Marx's theory of surplus value, and there was their joint theory of historical development, called 'dialectical materialism.' We will consider first the latter, which seems to me both more true and more important than the former.

Let us, in the first place, endeavour to be clear as to what the theory of dialectical materialism is. It is a theory which has various elements. Metaphysically it is materialistic: in method it adopts a form of dialectic suggested by Hegel, but differing from his in many important respects. It takes over from Hegel an outlook which is evolutionary, and in which the stages in evolution can be characterized in clear logical terms. These changes are of the nature of development, not so much in an ethical as in a logical sense—that is to say, they proceed according to a plan which a man of sufficient intellect could, theoretically, foretell, and which Marx himself professes to have foretold, in its main outlines, up to the moment of the universal establishment of Communism. The materialism of its metaphysics is translated, where human affairs are concerned, into the doctrine that the prime cause of all social phenomena is the method of production and exchange prevailing at any given period. The clearest statements of the theory are to be found in Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring*, of which the relevant parts have appeared in England under the title: *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. A few extracts will help to provide us with our text:

'It was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles: that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the economic conditions of their time; that the *economic* structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of

juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period.'

The discovery of this principle, according to Marx and Engels, showed that the coming of Socialism was inevitable.

'From that time forward Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historic-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict. But the Socialism of earlier days was as incompatible with this materialistic conception as the conception of Nature of the French materialists was with dialectics and modern natural science. The Socialism of earlier days certainly criticized the existing capitalistic mode of production and its consequences. But it could not explain them, and, therefore, could not get the mastery of them. It could only simply reject them as bad. The more strongly this earlier Socialism denounced the exploitation of the working-class, inevitable under Capitalism, the less able was it clearly to show in what this explanation consisted and how it arose.'

The same theory which is called Dialectical Materialism, is also called the Materialist Conception of History. Engels says: 'The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders, is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each particular epoch. The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place, with which the social order, adapted to

earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping. From this it also follows that the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light, must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be invented by deduction from fundamental principles, but are to be discovered in the stubborn facts of the existing system of production.'

The conflicts which lead to political upheavals are not primarily mental conflicts in the opinions and passions of human beings.

'This conflict between productive forces and modes of production is not a conflict engendered in the mind of man, like that between original sin and divine justice. It exists, in fact, objectively outside us, independently of the will and actions even of the men that have brought it on. Modern Socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working-class.'

There is a good statement of the materialist theory of history in an early joint work of Marx and Engels (1845-6), called *German Ideology*. It is there said that the materialist theory starts with the actual process of production of an epoch, and regards as the basis of history the form of economic life connected with this form of production and generated by it. This, they say, shows civil society in its various stages and in its action as the State. Moreover, from the economic basis the materialist theory explains such matters as religion, philosophy, and morals, and the reasons for the course of their development.

These quotations perhaps suffice to show what the theory is. A number of questions arise as soon as it is examined critically. Before going on to economics one is inclined to ask, first, whether materialism is true in philosophy, and second, whether the elements of Hegelian dialectic which are embedded in the Marxist theory of development can be justified apart from a full-fledged Hegelianism. Then comes the further question whether these metaphysical doctrines have any relevance to the historical thesis as regards economic development, and last of all comes the examination of this historical thesis itself. To state in advance what I shall be trying to prove, I hold (1) that materialism, in some sense, may be true, though it cannot be known to be so; (2) that the elements of dialectic which Marx took over from Hegel made him regard history as a more

rational process than it has in fact been, convincing him that all changes must be in some sense progressive, and giving him a feeling of certainty in regard to the future, for which there is no scientific warrant; (3) that the whole of his theory of economic development may perfectly well be true if his metaphysic is false, and false if his metaphysic is true, and that but for the influence of Hegel it would never have occurred to him that a matter so purely empirical could depend upon abstract metaphysics; (4) with regard to the economic interpretation of history, it seems to me very largely true, and a most important contribution to sociology; I cannot, however, regard it as *wholly* true, or feel any confidence that all great historical changes can be viewed as developments. Let us take these points one by one.

(1) *Materialism.* Marx's materialism was of a peculiar kind, by no means identical with that of the eighteenth century. When he speaks of the 'materialist conception of history,' he never emphasizes philosophical materialism, but only the economic causation of social phenomena. His philosophical position is best set forth (though very briefly) in his *Eleven theses on Feuerbach* (1845). In these he says:

The chief defect of all previous materialism—including that of Feuerbach—is that the object (*Gegenstand*), the reality, sensibility, is only apprehended under the form of the object (*Objekt*) or of contemplation (*Anschauung*), but not as human sensible activity or practice, not subjectively. Hence it came about that the active side was developed by idealism in opposition to materialism. . . .

The question whether objective truth belongs to human thinking is not a question of theory, but a practical question. The truth, *i.e.* the reality and power, of thought must be demonstrated in practice. The contest as to the reality or non-reality of a thought which is isolated from practice, is a purely scholastic question. . . .

The highest point that can be reached by contemplative materialism, *i.e.* by materialism which does not regard sensibility as a practical activity, is the contemplation of isolated individuals in "bourgeois society."

The standpoint of the old materialism is "bourgeois" society; the standpoint of the new is *human* society or socialized (*vergesellschaftete*) humanity.

'Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the real task is to alter it.'

The philosophy advocated in the earlier part of these theses is that which has since become familiar to the philosophical world through the writings of Dr Dewey, under the name of pragmatism or instrumentalism. Whether Dr Dewey is aware of having been anticipated by Marx, I do not know, but undoubtedly their opinions as to the metaphysical status of matter are virtually identical. In view of the importance attached by Marx to his theory of matter, it may be worth while to set forth his view rather more fully.

The conception of 'matter,' in old-fashioned materialism, was bound up with the conception of 'sensation.' Matter was regarded as the cause of sensation, and originally also as its object, at least in the case of sight and touch. Sensation was regarded as something in which a man is passive, and merely receives impressions from the outer world. This conception of sensation as passive is, however,—so the instrumentalists contend—an unreal abstraction, to which nothing actual corresponds. Watch an animal receiving impressions connected with another animal: its nostrils dilate, its ears twitch, its eyes are directed to the right point, its muscles become taut in preparation for appropriate movements. All this is action, mainly of a sort to improve the informative quality of impressions, partly such as to lead to fresh action in relation to the object. A cat seeing a mouse is by no means a passive recipient of purely contemplative impressions. And as a cat with a mouse, so is a textile manufacturer with a bale of cotton. The bale of cotton is an opportunity for action, it is something to be transformed. The machinery by which it is to be transformed is explicitly and obviously a product of human activity. Roughly speaking, all matter, according to Marx, is to be thought of as we naturally think of machinery: it has a raw material giving opportunity for action, but in its completed form it is a human product.

Philosophy has taken over from the Greeks a conception of passive contemplation, and has supposed that knowledge is obtained by means of contemplation. Marx maintains that we are always active, even when we come nearest to pure 'sensation': we are never merely apprehending our environment, but always at the same time altering it. This necessarily makes the older conception of knowledge inapplicable to our actual relations with the outer world. In place of knowing an object in the sense of passively receiving an impression of it, we can only know it in the sense of being able to act upon it success-

fully. That is why the test of all truth is practical. And since we change the object when we act upon it, truth ceases to be static, and becomes something which is continually changing and developing. That is why Marx calls his materialism 'dialectical,' because it contains within itself, like Hegel's dialectic, an essential principle of progressive change.

I think it may be doubted whether Engels quite understood Marx's views on the nature of matter and on the pragmatic character of truth; no doubt he thought he agreed with Marx, but in fact he came nearer to orthodox materialism.¹ Engels explains 'historical materialism,' as he understands it, in an Introduction, written in 1892, to his *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. Here, the part assigned to action seems to be reduced to the conventional task of scientific verification. He says: 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating. From the moment we turn to our own use these objects, according to the qualities we perceive in them, we put to an infallible test the correctness or otherwise of our sense-perceptions. . . . Not in one single instance, so far, have we been led to the conclusion that our sense-perceptions, scientifically controlled, induce in our minds ideas respecting the outer world that are, by their very nature, at variance with reality, or that there is an inherent incompatibility between the outer world and our sense-perceptions of it.'

There is no trace, here, of Marx's pragmatism, or of the doctrine that sensible objects are largely the products of our own activity. But there is also no sign of any consciousness of disagreement with Marx. It may be that Marx modified his view in later life, but it seems more probable that, on this subject as on some others, he held two different views simultaneously, and applied the one or the other as suited the purpose of his argument. He certainly held that some propositions were 'true' in a more than pragmatic sense. When, in *Capital*, he sets forth the cruelties of the industrial system as reported by Royal Commissions, he certainly holds that these cruelties took place, and not only that successful action will result from supposing that they took place. Similarly, when he prophesies the Communist revolution, he believes that there will be such an event, not merely that it is convenient to think so. His pragmatism must, therefore, have been only occasional—in fact when, on pragmatic grounds, it was justified by being convenient.

¹ Cf. Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 32.

It is worth noting that Lenin, who does not admit any divergence between Marx and Engels, adopts in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* a view which is more nearly that of Engels than that of Marx.

For my part, while I do not think that materialism can be proved, I think Lenin is right in saying that it is not disproved by modern physics. Since his time, and largely as a reaction against his success, respectable physicists have moved further and further from materialism, and it is naturally supposed, by themselves and by the general public, that it is physics which has caused this movement. I agree with Lenin that no substantially new argument has emerged since the time of Berkeley, with one exception. This one exception, oddly enough, is the argument set forth by Marx in his theses on Feuerbach, and completely ignored by Lenin. If there is no such thing as sensation, if matter as something which we passively apprehend is a delusion, and if 'truth' is a practical rather than a theoretical conception, then old-fashioned materialism, such as Lenin's, becomes untenable. And Berkeley's view becomes equally untenable, since it removes the object in relation to which we are active. Marx's instrumentalist theory, though he calls it materialistic, is really not so. As against materialism, its arguments have indubitably much force. Whether it is ultimately valid is a difficult question, as to which I have deliberately refrained from expressing an opinion, since I could not do so without writing a complete philosophical treatise.

(2) *Dialectic in History.* The Hegelian dialectic was a full-blooded affair. If you started with any partial concept and meditated on it, it would presently turn into its opposite; it and its opposite would combine into a synthesis, which would, in turn, become the starting point of a similar movement, and so on until you reached the Absolute Idea, on which you could reflect as long as you liked without discovering any new contradictions. The historical development of the world in time was merely an objectification of this process of thought. This view appeared possible to Hegel, because for him mind was the ultimate reality; for Marx, on the contrary, matter is the ultimate reality. Nevertheless he continues to think that the world develops according to a logical formula. To Hegel, the development of history is as logical as a game of chess. Marx and Engels keep the rules of chess, while supposing that the chessmen move themselves in accordance with the laws of physics, without

the intervention of a player. In one of the quotations from Engels which I gave earlier, he says: 'The means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light, *must* also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves.' This 'must' betrays a relic of the Hegelian belief that logic rules the world. Why should the outcome of a conflict in politics always be the establishment of some more developed system? This has not, in fact, been the case in innumerable instances. The barbarian invasion of Rome did not give rise to more developed economic forms, nor did the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, or the destruction of the Albigenses in the South of France. Before the time of Homer the Mycenaean civilization had been destroyed, and it was many centuries before a developed civilization again emerged in Greece. The examples of decay and retrogression are at least as numerous and as important in history as the examples of development. The opposite view, which appears in the works of Marx and Engels, is nothing but nineteenth-century optimism.

This is a matter of practical as well as theoretical importance. Communists always assume that conflicts between Communism and capitalism, while they may for a time result in partial victories for capitalism, must in the end lead to the establishment of Communism. They do not envisage another possible result, quite as probable, namely, a return to barbarism. We all know that modern war is a somewhat serious matter, and that in the next world war it is likely that large populations will be virtually exterminated by poison gases and bacteria. Can it be seriously supposed that after a war in which the great centres of population and most important industrial plant had been wiped out, the remaining population would be in a mood to establish scientific communism? Is it not practically certain that the survivors would be in a mood of gibbering and superstitious brutality, fighting all against all for the last turnip or the last mangel-wurzel? Marx used to do his work in the British Museum, but after the Great War the British Government placed a tank just outside the museum, presumably to teach the intellectuals their place. Communism is a highly intellectual, highly civilized doctrine, which can, it is true, be established, as it was in Russia, after a slight preliminary skirmish, such as that of 1914-18, but hardly after a really serious war. I am afraid the dogmatic optimism of the Communist doctrine must be regarded as a relic of Victorianism.

There is another curious point about the Communist interpretation of the dialectic. Hegel, as everyone knows, concluded his dialectical account of history with the Prussian State, which, according to him, was the perfect embodiment of the Absolute Idea. Marx, who had no affection for the Prussian State, regarded this as a lame and impotent conclusion. He said that the dialectic should be essentially revolutionary, and seemed to suggest that it could not reach any final static resting-place. Nevertheless we hear nothing about the further revolutions that are to happen after the establishment of Communism. In the last paragraph of *La Misère de la Philosophie* he says:

It is only in an order of things in which there will no longer be classes or class-antagonism that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*.

What these social evolutions are to be, or how they are to be brought about without the motive power of class conflict, Marx does not say. Indeed, it is hard to see how, on his theory, any further evolution would be possible. Except from the point of view of present-day politics, Marx's dialectic is no more revolutionary than that of Hegel. Moreover, since all human development has, according to Marx, been governed by conflicts of classes, and since under communism there is to be only one class, it follows that there can be no further development, and that mankind must go on for ever and ever in a state of Byzantine immobility. This does not seem plausible, and it suggests that there must be other possible causes of political events besides those of which Marx has taken account.

(3) *Irrelevance of Metaphysics.* The belief that metaphysics has any bearing upon practical affairs is, to my mind, a proof of logical incapacity. One finds physicists with all kinds of opinions: some follow Hume, some Berkeley, some are conventional Christians, some are materialists, some are sensationalists, some even are solipsists. This makes no difference whatever to their physics. They do not take different views as to when eclipses will occur, or what are the conditions of the stability of a bridge. That is because, in physics, there is some genuine knowledge, and whatever metaphysical beliefs a physicist may hold must adapt themselves to this knowledge. In so far as there is any genuine knowledge in the social sciences, the same thing is true. Whenever metaphysics is really useful in reaching a conclusion,

that is because the conclusion cannot be reached by scientific means, i.e. because there is no good reason to suppose it true. What can be known, can be known without metaphysics, and whatever needs metaphysics for its proof cannot be proved. In actual fact Marx advances in his books much detailed historical argument, in the main perfectly sound, but none of this in any way depends upon materialism. Take, for example, the fact that free competition tends to end in monopoly. This is an empirical fact, the evidence for which is equally patent whatever one's metaphysic may happen to be. Marx's metaphysic comes in in two ways: on the one hand, by making things more cut and dried and precise than they are in real life; on the other hand, in giving him a certainty about the future which goes beyond what a scientific attitude would warrant. But in so far as his doctrines of historical development can be shown to be true, his metaphysic is irrelevant. The question whether communism is going to become universal, is quite independent of metaphysics. It may be that a metaphysic is helpful in the fight: early Mohammedan conquests were much facilitated by the belief that the faithful who die in battle went straight to Paradise, and similarly the efforts of Communists may be stimulated by the belief that there is a god called Dialectical Materialism Who is fighting on their side, and will, in His own good time, give them the victory. On the other hand, there are many people to whom it is repugnant to have to profess belief in propositions for which they see no evidence, and the loss of such people must be reckoned as a disadvantage resulting from the Communist metaphysic.

(4) *Economic Causation in History.* In the main I agree with Marx, that economic causes are at the bottom of most of the great movements in history, not only political movements, but also those in such departments as religion, art, and morals. There are, however, important qualifications to be made. In the first place, Marx does not allow nearly enough for the time-lag. Christianity, for example, arose in the Roman Empire, and in many respects bears the stamp of the social system of that time, but Christianity has survived through many changes. Marx treats it as moribund. 'When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the eighteenth century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death-battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie.' (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*

by Karl Marx and F. Engels.) Nevertheless, in his own country it remained the most powerful obstacle to the realization of his own ideas,¹ and throughout the Western world its political influence is still enormous. I think it may be conceded that new doctrines that have any success must bear some relation to the economic circumstances of their age, but old doctrines can persist for many centuries without any such relation of any vital kind.

Another point where I think Marx's theory of history is too definite is that he does not allow for the fact that a small force may tip the balance when two great forces are in approximate equilibrium. Admitting that the great forces are generated by economic causes, it often depends upon quite trivial and fortuitous events which of the great forces gets the victory. In reading Trotsky's account of the Russian Revolution, it is difficult to believe that Lenin made no difference, but it was touch and go whether the German Government allowed him to get to Russia. If the minister concerned had happened to be suffering from dyspepsia on a certain morning, he might have said 'No' when in fact he said 'Yes,' and I do not think it can be rationally maintained that without Lenin the Russian Revolution would have achieved what it did. To take another instance: if the Prussians had happened to have a good General at the Battle of Valmy, they might have wiped out the French Revolution. To take an example, it may be maintained quite plausibly that if Henry VIII had not fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, the United States would not now exist. For it was owing to this event that England broke with the Papacy, and therefore did not acknowledge the Pope's gift of the Americas to Spain and Portugal. If England had remained Catholic, it is probable that what is now the United States would have been part of Spanish America.

This brings me to another point in which Marx's philosophy of history was faulty. He regards economic conflicts as always conflicts between classes, whereas the majority of them have been between races of nations. English industrialism of the early nineteenth century was internationalist, because it expected to retain its monopoly of industry. It seemed to Marx, as it did to Cobden, that the world was going to be increasingly cosmopolitan. Bismarck, however, gave a different turn to events,

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Another set of causes which have had considerable importance in history are those which may be called medical. The Black Death, for example, was an event of whose importance Marx was well aware, but the causes of the Black Death were only in part economic. Undoubtedly it would not have occurred among populations at a higher economic level, but Europe had been quite as poor for many centuries as it was in 1348, so that the proximate cause of the epidemic cannot have been poverty. Take again such a matter as the prevalence of malaria and yellow fever in the tropics, and the fact that these diseases have now become preventable. This is a matter which has very important economic effects, though not itself of an economic nature.

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by Karl Marx and F. Engels.) Nevertheless, in his own country it remained the most powerful obstacle to the realization of his own ideas,¹ and throughout the Western world its political influence is still enormous. I think it may be conceded that new doctrines that have any success must bear some relation to the economic circumstances of their age, but old doctrines can persist for many centuries without any such relation of any vital kind.

Another point where I think Marx's theory of history is too definite is that he does not allow for the fact that a small force may tip the balance when two great forces are in approximate equilibrium. Admitting that the great forces are generated by economic causes, it often depends upon quite trivial and fortuitous events which of the great forces gets the victory. In reading Trotsky's account of the Russian Revolution, it is difficult to believe that Lenin made no difference, but it was touch and go whether the German Government allowed him to get to Russia. If the minister concerned had happened to be suffering from dyspepsia on a certain morning, he might have said 'No' when in fact he said 'Yes,' and I do not think it can be rationally maintained that without Lenin the Russian Revolution would have achieved what it did. To take another instance: if the Prussians had happened to have a good General at the Battle of Valmy, they might have wiped out the French Revolution. To take an even more fantastic example, it may be maintained quite plausibly that if Henry VIII had not fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, the United States would not now exist. For it was owing to this event that England broke with the Papacy, and therefore did not acknowledge the Pope's gift of the Americas to Spain and Portugal. If England had remained Catholic, it is probable that what is now the United States would have been part of Spanish America.

This brings me to another point in which Marx's philosophy of history was faulty. He regards economic conflicts as always conflicts between classes, whereas the majority of them have been between races of nations. English industrialism of the early nineteenth century was internationalist, because it expected to retain its monopoly of industry. It seemed to Marx, as it did to Cobden, that the world was going to be increasingly cosmopolitan. Bismarck, however, gave a different turn to events,

¹ 'For Germany,' wrote Marx, in 1844, 'the critique of religion is essentially completed.'

and industrialism ever since has grown more and more nationalistic. Even the conflict between capitalism and communism takes increasingly the form of a conflict between nations. It is true, of course, that the conflicts between nations are very largely economic, but the grouping of the world by nations is itself determined by causes which are in the main not economic.

Another set of causes which have had considerable importance in history are those which may be called medical. The Black Death, for example, was an event of whose importance Marx was well aware, but the causes of the Black Death were only in part economic. Undoubtedly it would not have occurred among populations at a higher economic level, but Europe had been quite as poor for many centuries as it was in 1348, so that the proximate cause of the epidemic cannot have been poverty. Take again such a matter as the prevalence of malaria and yellow fever in the tropics, and the fact that these diseases have now become preventable. This is a matter which has very important economic effects, though not itself of an economic nature.

Much the most necessary correction in Marx's theory is as to the causes of changes in methods of production. Methods of production appear in Marx as prime causes, and the reasons for which they change from time to time are left completely unexplained. As a matter of fact, methods of production change, in the main, owing to intellectual causes, owing, that is to say, to scientific discoveries and inventions. Marx thinks that discoveries and inventions are made when the economic situation calls for them. This, however, is a quite unhistorical view. Why was there practically no experimental science from the time of Archimedes to the time of Leonardo? For six centuries after Archimedes the economic conditions were such as should have made scientific work easy. It was the growth of science after the Renaissance that led to modern industry. This intellectual causation of economic processes is not adequately recognized by Marx.

History can be viewed in many ways, and many general formulae can be invented which cover enough of the ground to seem adequate if the facts are carefully selected. I suggest, without undue solemnity, the following alternative theory of the causation of the industrial revolution: industrialism is due to modern science, modern science is due to Galileo, Galileo is due to Copernicus, Copernicus is due to the Renaissance, the Renaissance is due to the fall of Constantinople, the fall of Constan-

tinople is due to the migration of the Turks, the migration of the Turks is due to the desiccation of Central Asia. Therefore the fundamental study in searching for historical causes is hydrography.

The Theory of Surplus Value

MARX's theory of surplus value is simple in its main outline, though complicated in its details. He argues that a wage-earner produces goods equal in value to his wages in a portion of the working day, often assumed to be about half, and in the remainder of his working day produces goods which become the property of the capitalist although he has not had to make any payment for them. Thus the wage-earner produces more than he is paid for; the value of this additional product is what Marx calls 'surplus value.' Out of surplus value come profits, rent, tithes, taxes—in a word, everything except wages.

This view is based upon an economic argument which is not altogether easy to follow, the more so as it is partly valid, partly fallacious. It is, however, very necessary to analyse Marx's argument, since it has had a profound effect upon the development of Socialism and Communism.

Marx starts from the orthodox economic doctrine that the exchange value of a commodity is proportional to the amount of labour required for its production. We have already considered this doctrine in connection with Ricardo, and have seen that it is true only partially and in certain circumstances. It is true in so far as the cost of production is represented by wages, and there is competition among capitalists which keeps the price as low as possible. If the capitalists have formed themselves into a Trust or Cartel, or if the cost of raw material is a large part of the total cost of production, the theory is no longer true. Marx, however, accepted the theory from the economists of his day, although he despised them, apparently without any examination of the grounds in its favour.

The next step in the argument is derived (without adequate acknowledgment) from Malthus. It followed from Malthus's theory of population that there would always be competition among wage-earners, which would ensure that the value of labour, like that of other commodities, should be measured by its cost

of production (and reproduction). That is to say, wages would suffice for the bare necessities of the labourer and his family, and under a competitive system they could not rise above this level.

Malthus's theory of population, like Ricardo's theory of value, is subject to limitations which we have already considered. Marx always rejects it contemptuously, and is bound to do so, since, as Malthus was careful to point out, it would, if valid, make all communistic Utopias impossible. But Marx does not advance any reasoned argument against Malthus, and, what is still more remarkable, he accepts without question the law that wages must always (under a competitive system) be at subsistence level, which depends upon the acceptance of the very theory that he at other times rejects.

From these premises, the labour theory of value and the iron law of wages, the theory of surplus value seems to follow. The wage-earner, let us say, works twelve hours a day, and in six hours produces the value of his labour. What he produces in the remaining six hours represents the capitalist's exploitation, his surplus value. Although the capitalist does not have to pay for the last six hours, yet for some unexplained reason, he is able to make the price of his product proportional to labour-time required for production. Marx forgets that this whole theory depended upon the assumption that all labour had to be paid for, and the further assumption that the capitalists competed with each other.¹ In the absence of these assumptions, there is no reason why value should be proportional to the labour-time of production.

If we assume that there are many competing capitalists in the business in question, then, supposing the state of affairs to have been initially as Marx supposes, it will be possible to lower the price and still make a profit, which will therefore be done as a result of competition. The capitalist, it is true, will have to pay rent, and probably interest on borrowed money; but so far as he is concerned, he will be forced down to the lowest profit at which he thinks it worth while to carry on the business. If, on the other hand, there is no competition, the price will be fixed, as with all monopolies, by the principle of 'what the traffic will bear,' which has nothing to do with the amount of labour involved.

¹ Though this is stated by Engels in his introduction to *La Misère de l'Homme*.

While, therefore, it is undeniable that men make fortunes by exploiting labour, Marx's analysis of the economic process by which this is done appears to be faulty. And the main reason why it is not correct is the acceptance of Ricardo's theory of value.

I have written above as though (apart from currency fluctuations) value could be measured by price. This, indeed, follows from the definition of value, which is the amount of other commodities for which a given commodity will exchange. Price is merely a means of expressing the exchange values of different commodities in commensurable terms: if we wish to compare the values of a number of different commodities, we do so most easily by means of their price, i.e. (under a gold currency) by their exchange value in relation to gold. In so far as value means 'exchange value,' the fact that (at any given moment) value is measured by price is a mere logical consequence of the definition.

But Marx has another conception of value which obscurely conflicts with the definition of value as exchange value. This other conception, which never emerges clearly, is ethical or metaphysical; it seems to mean 'what a commodity *ought* to exchange for.' A few quotations will illustrate the difficulty of arriving at Marx's meaning on this point.

'Price,' he says, 'is the money-name of the labour realized in a commodity. Hence the expression of the equivalence of a commodity with the sum of money constituting its price, is a tautology, just as in general the expression of the relative value of a commodity is a statement of the equivalence of two commodities. But although price, being the exponent of magnitude of a commodity's value, is the exponent of its exchange-ratio with money, it does not follow that the exponent of this exchange ratio is necessarily the exponent of the magnitude of the commodity's value. . . . Magnitude of value expresses a relation of social production, it expresses the connection that necessarily exists between a certain article and the portion of the total labour-time of society required to produce it. As soon as the magnitude of value is converted into price, the above necessary relation takes the shape of a more or less accidental exchange-ratio between a single commodity and another, the money-commodity. But this exchange-ratio may express either the real magnitude of that commodity's value, or the quantity of gold deviating from that value, for which, according to circumstances, it may be parted with. The possibility, therefore, of o

quantitative incongruity between price and magnitude of value, or the deviation of the former from the latter, is inherent in the price-form itself.'

So far it might be supposed that Marx is thinking only of accidental fluctuations, such as might be due to the relative shrewdness or impecuniosity of buyer and seller. He goes on, however, to a more serious distinction between price and value, which, if he had followed it up, would have raised difficulties for him of which he apparently remained unaware. He says:

'The price-form, however, is not only compatible with the possibility of a quantitative incongruity between magnitude of value and price, i.e., between the former and its expression in money, but it may also conceal a qualitative inconsistency, so much so, that, although money is nothing but the value-form of commodities, price ceases altogether to express value. Objects that in themselves are no commodities, such as conscience, honour, &c., are capable of being offered for sale by their holders, and of thus acquiring, through their price, the form of commodities. Hence an object may have a price without having value. The price in that case is imaginary, like certain quantities in mathematics. On the other hand, the imaginary price-form may sometimes conceal either a direct or indirect real value-relation; for instance, the price of uncultivated land, which is without value, because no human labour has been incorporated in it.'

It is of course necessary for Marx, with his labour theory of value, to maintain that virgin land has no value. Since it often has a price, the distinction between price and value is essential to him at this point. Exchange-value, it now appears, is not the actual amount of other goods for which a given commodity can, in fact, be exchanged; it is the amount of goods for which the commodity could be exchanged if people valued commodities in proportion to the amount of labour required for their production. Marx concedes that people do not so value commodities when they are buying and selling, for, if they did, it would be impossible to exchange virgin land, upon which no labour has been expended, for gold, which has had to be mined. Accordingly when Marx says that the value of a commodity is measured by the amount of labour required for its production, he does not mean to say anything about what the commodity is likely to fetch in the market. What, then, does he mean?

He may mean either of two things. He may be giving a mere

verbal definition of the word 'value': when I speak of the 'value' of a commodity (he may be saying), I mean the amount of labour required to produce it, or rather, such quantity of other commodities as an equivalent amount of labour would produce. Or, again, he may be using 'value' in an ethical sense: he may mean that goods *ought* to exchange in proportion to the labour involved, and would do so in a world ruled by economic justice. If he adopts the first of these alternatives, most of the propositions in his theory of value become trivial, while those which assert a connection between value and price become arbitrary and remain partly false. If he adopts the second alternative, he is no longer analysing economic facts, but setting up an economic ideal. Moreover, this ideal would be an impossible one, for the reasons emphasized in Ricardo's theory of rent: a bushel of wheat grown on bad land embodies more labour than one grown on good land, but could not in any imaginable economic system be sold at a higher price. Either the verbal or the ethical alternative 'as to the meaning of 'value,' therefore, reduces Marx's economic theory to a state of confusion.

The ethical interpretation of 'value,' nevertheless, seems to have had some influence, not only on Marx, but on all those who upheld the labour theory of value. In the case of Marx, this is borne out by the fact that, in connection with the price of virgin land, he mentions such things as the price of a man's honour, where we feel that there is something ethically reprehensible in the existence of a price. In the case of other economists, it is interesting to observe that Hodgskin, from whom Marx learned much, and who first among theorists applied the labour-theory of value in the interests of the proletariat, finds the source of this theory in Locke's doctrine that the justification of private property is a man's right to the produce of his own labour.¹ If he exchanges the produce of his own labour for the produce of an equal amount of some one else's labour, justice is preserved; the labour-theory is therefore in conformity with ethics. This point of view, perhaps unconsciously, seems to have influenced Marx: where price and value diverged, he felt that price represented the wickedness of capitalism.

Much of the efficacy of Marx's writing depends upon tacit assumptions in his arithmetical illustrations. Let us take one of these as typical of many.

¹ Halévy, *Thomas Hodgskin*, pp. 208-9, Société Nouvelle de Librairie et d'édition, Paris, 1903.

'One more example. Jacob gives the following calculation for the year 1815. Owing to the previous adjustment of several items it is very imperfect; nevertheless for our purpose it is sufficient. In it he assumes the price of wheat to be 8s. a quarter, and the average yield per acre to be 22 bushels.

Value Produced Per Acre

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Seed ..	1 9 0	Tithes, Rates, and Taxes ..	1 1 0
Manure ..	2 10 0	Rent ..	1 8 0
Wages ..	3 10 0	Farmer's Profit and Interest ..	1 2 0
Total ..	7 9 0	Total ..	3 11 0

'Assuming that the price of the product is the same as its value, we here find the surplus-value distributed under the various heads of profit, interest, rent, &c. We have nothing to do with these in detail; we simply add them together, and the sum is a surplus-value of £3 11s. od. The sum of £3 19s. od., paid for seed and manure, is constant capital, and we put it equal to zero. There is left the sum of £3 10s. od., which is the variable capital advanced: and we see that a new value of £3 10s. od. + £3 11s. od. has been produced in its place. Therefore $\frac{s}{v} = \frac{\text{£3 11s. od.}}{\text{£3 10s. od.}}$, giving a

rate of surplus-value of more than 100%. The labourer employs more than one-half of his working day in producing the surplus-value, which different persons, under different pretexts, share amongst themselves.'

In this illustration, s means surplus-value, and v means variable capital, i.e. wages. It will be seen that Marx includes in surplus-value the whole of what the farmer makes, and the whole of the rates and taxes. It is therefore implied in the calculation (*a*) that the farmer does no work, (*b*) that the rates and taxes are wholly handed over to the idle rich. Marx would not, of course, make either of these assumptions in explicit terms, but they are implicit in his figures, both in this case and in every analogous illustration. In 1815, the year to which the above example applies, the rates were mainly expended in wages, under the old Poor Law. The taxes, it is true, went chiefly to the fund-holders, but of the

remainder some part was certainly spent in useful ways—for example, in keeping up the British Museum, without which Marx could not have written his *magnum opus*.

More important than the question of rates and taxes is the question of the capitalist's work. In the case of a small capitalist, such as a farmer, it is ridiculous to treat him as one of the idle rich. If a farm were run by the State, it would need an overseer, and a competent overseer could probably obtain a salary about equal to the farmer's profit, taking one year with another. The cotton manufacturers of the years before 1846, who formed Engels's conception of the capitalist, and thence Marx's, were largely men in a rather small way, who worked almost entirely on borrowed capital. Their income depended upon their skill in using the money that had been lent to them. It is true that they were brutal, but it is not true that they were idle. Somebody has to organize a factory, somebody has to buy the machinery and sell the product, somebody has to do the day-to-day supervision. In the early days of capitalism, all this was done by the employer; yet Marx regards the whole of his earnings as entirely due to appropriation of the surplus value created by the employees. I know there are passages where the opposite is admitted, but they are isolated, whereas the assumption that the employer does no work is pervasive.

In the modern large-scale developments of capitalistic enterprise, it is true, the capitalist is often idle. The shareholders of railways do nothing, and the directors do not do much, in the way of managing the business. The work of management, in all large concerns, tends to fall more and more into the hands of salaried experts, leaving the capitalists as mere recipients of interest. In so far as socialism represents a more scientific organization of industry, less chaotic and less lacking in forethought, salaried experts might be expected to sympathize with it. They seldom do so, however, because, as a result of the bias given by Marx, Socialism has tended to stand, not only for the workers as against the idle rich, but for the manual workers as against both the rich and the brain workers. Marx, by ignoring the functions of the small-scale capitalist in managing his business, produced a theory which could not do justice to the salaried experts who do the work of management in large-scale capitalism. The glorification of manual work as against brain work was a theoretical error, and its political effects have been disastrous.

It may be said that it is of no importance whether Marx was right in the niceties of his economic analysis. He was right in maintaining that the proletariat were brutally exploited, and that their exploitation was due to the power of the rich. To distinguish one class of rich men from another was, from this point of view, unprofitable; the important thing was to end exploitation, and this could only be done by conquering power in a fight against the rich collectively.

To this there are two objections. The first is, that the abolition of exploitation, if unwisely carried out, might leave the proletariat even more destitute than before; the second, that Marx has not rightly analysed where the power of money resides, and has therefore given himself an unnecessary number of enemies.

The first of these objections applies to the destruction of any system in which power is unequally distributed. The holders of power will always use their position to obtain special advantages for themselves; at the same time, they will in general wish to prevent chaos, and to insure a certain efficiency in the system by which they profit. They will tend to have a monopoly of experience in government and management. It may well happen that, if they are suddenly dispossessed, lack of knowledge and experience on the part of those previously oppressed will cause them to fall into even greater sufferings than those from which they have escaped. If this is not to happen, there must be, on the side of the newly emancipated, a sufficient amount of governmental and technical intelligence to carry on the political and economic life of the community. Successful revolutions, such as the French Revolution, have had more knowledge and intelligence on the side of the rebels than among the defenders of the old system. Where this condition is not fulfilled, the transition is bound to be arduous, and may never succeed in producing any improvement. It is doubtful whether the population of Haiti has been happier since it threw off the power of the French.

As regards the analysis of the power of money, I think that Henry George was more nearly right than Marx. Henry George, following Spence and the French physiocrats, found the source of economic power in land, and held that the only necessary reform was the payment of rent to the State rather than to private landowners. This was also the view of Herbert Spencer until he became old and respected. In its older forms, it is scarcely

applicable to the modern world, but it contains an important element of truth, which Marx unfortunately missed. Let us try to restate the matter in modern terms.

All power to exploit others depends upon the possession of some complete or partial, permanent or temporary monopoly, but this monopoly may be of the most diverse kinds. Land is the most obvious. If I own land in London or New York, I can, owing to the law of trespass, invoke the whole of the forces of the State to prevent others from making use of my land without my consent. Those who wish to live or work on my land must therefore pay me rent, and if my land is very advantageous they must pay me much rent. I do not have to do anything at all in return for the rent. The capitalist has to organize a business, the professional man has to exercise his skill, but the landowner can levy toll on their industry without doing anything at all. Similarly if I own coal or iron or any other mineral, I can make my own terms with those who wish to mine it, so long as I leave them an average rate of profit. Every improvement in industry, every increase in the population of cities, automatically augments what the landowner can exact in the form of rent. While others work, he remains idle; but their work enables him to grow richer and richer.

Land, however, is by no means the only form of monopoly. The owners of capital, collectively, are monopolists as against borrowers; that is why they are able to charge interest. The control of credit is a form of monopoly quite as important as land. Those who control credit can encourage or ruin a business as their judgment may direct; they can even, within limits, decide whether industry in general is to be prosperous or depressed. This power they owe to monopoly.

The men who have most economic power in the modern world derive it from land, minerals, and credit, in combination. Great bankers control iron ore, coalfields, and railways; smaller capitalists are at their mercy, almost as completely as proletarians. The conquest of economic power demands as its first step the ousting of the monopolists. It will then remain to be seen whether, in a world in which there is no private monopoly, much harm is done by men who have achieved success by skill without the aid of ultimate economic power. It is questionable whether, on the balance, the world would now be the better if Mr Henry Ford had been prevented from making cheap cars; and the harm that is done by great industrialists, is usually dependent

upon their access to some source of monopoly power. In labour disputes, the employer is the immediate enemy, but is often no more than a private in the opposing army. The real enemy is the monopolist.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Politics of Marxism

MARX'S political doctrines were an outcome of his economic theory and of his dialectical materialism. Previous Socialists had appealed to men's benevolence and sense of justice. Owen remained, to the end of his days, essentially the kindly patriarch of New Lanark. Saint Simon's appeal was religious: he aimed at creating a new type of Christianity. Fourier, like Owen, aimed at founding colonies whose success should show the excellence of his principles. Marx realized the futility of such methods. He saw that benevolence will never be sufficiently powerful to transform the whole economic system; also that Socialism cannot be introduced in isolated little communities piecemeal, but must be inaugurated on a large scale as a result of a political upheaval. He and Engels condemned their Socialist predecessors as Utopians. The problem for them was: theoretically, to foresee the inevitable dialectical development of industrialism; practically, to insure the conquest of power by the proletariat, whose class interest was to bring about the transition from capitalism to Socialism.

Marx and Engels perceived, as early as 1848, that competition must issue in monopoly. They saw that businesses tend to increase in size, and that every advance in technique promotes this increase. Before Engels died, the growth of Trusts in America had made this obvious; but to have perceived it in 1848 showed a perspicacity which no one else at that period possessed. Marx argued that the concentration of capital would diminish the number of capitalists, and that those who had been defeated in the competitive struggle would sink into the proletariat. In the end, there would be left only a few capitalists, and almost all the rest of the population would be proletarians. The proletarians would have learnt, in the course of their conflicts with capital, to organize, first nationally, then internationally. At last,

when the capitalists had grown sufficiently few and the proletariat sufficiently organized, they would conquer power and put an end to the capitalist era:

'Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.'¹

All politics, for Marx, consists in the conflict of classes, brought about by changing methods of economic technique. The bourgeoisie conquered the feudal nobility in the great French Revolution, and again, so far as was necessary, in the revolution of 1830. In England, the same conquest was partially achieved by the Civil War, but was completed by the Reform Act of 1832 and the repeal of the Corn Laws. In Germany, the same thing was attempted, but without complete success, in the revolution of 1848. In France, the same year saw a beginning of a new revolution, that of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In the early months of the French revolution of 1848, the Socialists had considerable power, and were able to establish the national workshops, where in theory every man could obtain paid employment. The Socialists were, however, put down with great slaughter during the month of June, after which, for a long time, they played no ostensible part in politics. Marx looked forward to a series of such conflicts, in which the defeat of the Socialists would become progressively more difficult, and finally impossible. As the bourgeoisie had defeated the feudal nobility, so, in the end, the proletariat were certain to defeat the bourgeoisie.

No prophet is altogether right in his anticipations, but Marx was right in many respects. Competition has been largely succeeded by monopoly; the proletariat has become more and more

¹ *Capital*, Vol. I. pp. 836-7.

Socialistic; in one great State, the government is attempting to establish Communism. There are, however, a number of respects in which he was mistaken, and some of these are of very great importance.

His most serious mistake was that he underrated the strength of nationalism. 'Proletarians of all nations, unite!' says the Communist Manifesto. But experience has shown that, as yet, most proletarians hate foreigners more than they hate employers; in 1914, even Marxists, with few exceptions, obeyed the orders of the capitalist State to which they happened to belong. Even if proletarians of white races could, in time, be induced to ignore national boundaries, it will require a much longer time before they feel any real solidarity with competitors of yellow, brown or black race. Yet, until they do so, and the yellow, brown and black proletarians reciprocate the feeling, they can hardly achieve any stable victory over the capitalists.

It is not only on the side of the proletariat that nationalism proved stronger than purely economic forces. On the side of the capitalists, also, the boundaries of States have proved to be usually the boundaries of combination. Most capitalist monopolies are national, not world-wide. In the steel industry, for example, there is monopoly, actual or virtual, in America, in France, in Germany, but these several monopolies are independent of each other. Almost the only industry which is truly international is the armament industry,¹ because to it the important thing is that wars should be long and frequent, not that either side should be victorious. With this exception, the monopolists of different countries compete against each other, and cause their respective governments to help them in the competition. The rivalry between nations is just as much an economic conflict as the class war, and at least as important in modern politics, yet according to Marx all politics are controlled by the conflict of classes.

Marx had the less excuse for his failure to give due weight to nationalism as he himself had taken part in the German revolution of 1848, and had carefully noted the part played by nationalism in its suppression. In his book, *Revolution and Counter Revolution, or Germany in 1848*, which he wrote in 1851-2, he tells how the Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose nationalism afterwards became the proximate cause of the

¹ See *The Secret International and Patriotism Ltd.*, published by the Union of Democratic Control.

Great War, and who now form Czechoslovakia and part of Yugoslavia, endeavoured to free themselves from the German yoke and were finally defeated. He has no sympathy with them whatsoever, but views the whole matter from the standpoint of an orthodox German nationalist. He says:

Thus ended for the present, and most likely for ever, the attempts of the Slavonians of Germany to recover an independent national existence. Scattered remnants of numerous nations, whose nationality and political vitality had long been extinguished, and who in consequence had been obliged, for almost a thousand years, to follow in the wake of a mightier nation, their conqueror, the same as the Welsh in England, the Basques in Spain, the Bas-Bretons in France, and at a more recent period the Spanish and French Creoles in those portions of North America occupied of late by the Anglo-American race—these dying nationalities, the Bohemians, Carinthians, Dalmatians, etc., had tried to profit by the universal confusion of 1848, in order to restore their political *status quo* of A.D. 800. The history of a thousand years ought to have shown them that such a retrogression was impossible; that if all the territory east of the Elbe and Saale had at one time been occupied by kindred Slavonians, this fact merely proved the historical tendency, and at the same time physical and intellectual power of the German nation to subdue, absorb, and assimilate its ancient eastern neighbours: that this tendency of absorption on the part of the Germans had always been, and still was, one of the mightiest means by which the civilization of Western Europe had been spread in the east of that continent; that it could only cease whenever the process of Germanization had reached the frontier of large, compact, unbroken nations, capable of an independent national life, such as the Hungarians, and in some degree the Poles; and that, therefore, the natural and inevitable fate of these dying nations was to allow this process of dissolution and absorption by their stronger neighbours to complete itself. Certainly this is no very flattering prospect for the national ambition of the Panslavistic dreamers who succeeded in agitating a portion of the Bohemian and South Slavonian people: but can they expect that history would retrograde a thousand years in order to please a few phthisical bodies of men, who in every part of the territory they occupy are interspersed with and surrounded by Germans, who from time almost immemorial have had for all purposes of civilization no other language but the German, and who lack the

very first conditions of national existence, numbers and compactness of territory? Thus, the Panslavistic rising, which everywhere in the German and Hungarian Slavonic territories was the cloak for the restoration to independence of all these numberless petty nations, everywhere clashed with the European revolutionary movements, and the Slavonians, although pretending to fight for liberty, were invariably (the Democratic portion of the Poles excepted) found on the side of despotism and reaction. Thus it was in Germany, thus in Hungary, thus even here and there in Turkey. Traitors to the popular cause, supporters and chief props to the Austrian Government's cabal, they placed themselves in the position of outlaws in the eyes of all revolutionary nations. And although nowhere the mass of the people had a part in the petty squabbles about nationality raised by the Panslavistic leaders, for the very reason that they were too ignorant, yet it will never be forgotten that in Prague, in a half-German town, crowds of Slavonian fanatics cheered and repeated the cry: "Rather the Russian knout than German Liberty!" After their first evaporated effort in 1848, and after the lesson the Austrian Government gave them, it is not likely that another attempt at a later opportunity will be made. But if they should try again under similar pretexts to ally themselves to the counter-revolutionary force, the duty of Germany is clear. No country in a state of revolution and involved in external war can tolerate a Vendée in its very heart.'

If Marx had had any power of self-criticism, the fact that he could write this passage should have shown him that even Marxists are not exempt from nationalist bias.

Marx sometimes took the view that nationalism is unavoidable under capitalism, and can only be superseded by the rule of the proletariat. Thus he wrote in 1846:

"The phantasms of a European Republic, of perpetual peace under political organization, have become just as laughable as the phrases concerning the union of the peoples under the aegis of free trade. . . . The bourgeoisie has in every country its special interests, and, as for it there is nothing superior to interests, it can never rise above nationality. . . . But the proletarians have in all countries one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, one and the same fight in prospect; the proletarians, as regards the great mass, are by nature without national prejudices, and their whole culture and movement is

essentially humanitarian, anti-national. Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, the proletariat alone can allow the different nations to fraternize.'

As yet, this remains an unfulfilled dream.

While Marx was right in prophesying the concentration of capitalist industry, so far at least as its more important branches are concerned, into monopolistic or nearly monopolistic forms, he was wrong in supposing that this implied a great diminution in the number of individual capitalists. In such countries as England, France, or Holland, there are innumerable old ladies, retired colonels, and *rentiers* of various kinds, who live on the interest of their investments. Such people are the backbone of the parties of extreme reaction, since they have nothing to occupy their minds except the stability of their shares. Even working men become interested in the maintenance of the capitalist system if they belong to a friendly society which has invested funds. There is, in fact, no such clear-cut division between capitalist and proletarian as Marx assumed. Following Hegel, he looked for the embodiment of logical categories in the actual world, and expected facts to have the sharp boundaries belonging to A and not-A in the text-books. In any country of old-established wealth, this is by no means the case; on the contrary, capitalistic interests penetrate far down into the proletariat, and are a means of welding together classes which Marx thought would increasingly diverge. For example, the following persons, as shareholders in Handley Page Ltd., manufacturers of aeroplanes, had on June 5, 1931, a common interest, not only in capitalism, but in war:

Sir Basil Mayhew, K.B.E., Sir Henry Grayson, K.B.E., many banks and investment companies, Wing Commander Louis Greig, C.V.O., Mr C. R. Fairey, the Right Hon. J. Downe, C.M.G., D.S.O., the Duchess of Grafton, Lord Arthur Browne, Mr F. Handley Page, Mr Arthur J. Page, . . . taxi-drivers, municipal officers, printers, stationmasters, brass founders, boot repairers, wood-sorters, carpenters, chemists, farmers, police-constables, school-masters, fish merchants, naval officers, an Air Vice-Marshal, an occasional clergyman, a Brigadier-General, a civil servant in the Foreign Office, a professor of music, doctors, and the trustees for the Wesleyan Chapel Purposes (Ltd.), Manchester.¹

¹ *The Secret International*, published by the Union of Democratic Control, p. 19.

This harmony of interest between different classes arises not only from concern for investments, but from causes connected with the nature of a man's work. Take, say, a policeman. In so far as he is the guardian of capitalist law and order, he counts as an ally of the capitalist. When he wishes to improve his condition by promotion, he must please the authorities; but when he wishes to improve his condition by improving the condition of policemen in general, he becomes a proletarian, and resorts to the mechanism of unions and strikes. The same considerations apply to soldiers and sailors. But a capitalist State which has any wisdom and avoids defeat in war can always keep these classes on its side. Marx realized the existence of such classes but did not realize how large and important they would become.

There is another respect in which Marx's division of industrial mankind into capitalist and proletarian went wrong. This is as regards the salaried employees in large capitalistic undertakings. The work of management, which was done by the employer himself a hundred years ago, is now usually left to paid officials. And apart from management, there is often need of technical and scientific experts; this is true especially in chemical industries. There is thus a new middle class between the capitalist and the proletarian. This new middle class has taken on all or most of the functions formerly performed by the employer. In America, where capital is less hereditary than in Europe, the very rich still actually control industry in certain broad aspects, particularly as regards finance and general policy; but this state of affairs is likely to pass as American capitalism becomes more old-established. In England, the capitalist is becoming a *roi fainéant*, and the salaried employee is his *maire du palais*. This tendency will, in all likelihood, become universal.

The salaried worker has no reason to love the capitalist, who gets the lion's share of the booty without doing the work. But the salaried worker has a privileged position as compared to the wage-earner, and hesitates to throw in his lot with the wage-earner by becoming a Socialist. This is no doubt partly from snobbery, but by no means wholly. Marx minimized all work except manual work, and did not attempt to appeal to any class except the proletariat. Scientific experts are aware of their importance in the modern world, and are not prepared to subordinate themselves to manual workers. Under the capitalists their importance is at least recognized by their being employed and treated with a certain respect; they do not feel any security

that their status would be as good after a proletarian revolution. Accordingly they remain, for the most part, the more or less reluctant allies of the capitalists.

Marx, by his teaching, created the class war which he prophesied, but by his excessive glorification of manual labour he caused the division of classes to come at a lower point in the social scale than was necessary, and thereby made enemies of the most important class in the modern economic world, the men who do the skilled work of industrialism. These men could have been won over to Socialism—or at any rate many of them could—if it had been presented, not as a doctrine of vengeance on the more fortunate classes, but as a more scientific and intelligent way of organizing the world's production and distribution. Private capitalism has proved itself impossibly chaotic, and unable to produce that prosperity which ought to result from the increased productivity of labour. It is clear that the incentive of profit is no longer the right one over a large field of production, and that some method of organization such as Socialists advocate has become necessary to the economic well-being of mankind.

It is possible, at the present day, to advocate international socialism from the standpoint of efficiency rather than from that of the class-war. But in the England of the '40s, from which Marx's outlook was in the main derived, such a point of view was scarcely possible. Any man not utterly blinded by class bias was bound, unless he were a callous brute, to feel a fierce indignation against the industrial employers. At that time, the proletariat was growing rapidly, and the opposition of class against class in all industrial regions was fierce and sharp. Most of the middle-class economists made themselves apologists for the employers, and defended abominations by means of fallacies which Marx exposes with well-deserved scorn.

There is nothing astonishing in the fact that Marx's appeal was mainly to class antagonism, when one considers what British capitalism was in the first half of the nineteenth century. And although, in Great Britain, capitalism became less brutal after 1846, its cruelties continued in full force wherever it was conquering new territory; indeed, in the Belgian Congo it reached a pitch of atrocity far surpassing the worst evils of the mills and mines in the North of England. There is no limit to the cruelties men will inflict for the sake of gain. This is not a new fact produced by capitalism: Cœur de Lion's treatment of the Jews,

Pisarro's treatment of the Incas, show the same cold-blooded cupidity as was shown by the employers who filled Marx with detestation. But when we consider him as a prophet for the present day, the matter is somewhat different. Marx's hatred, natural as it was, and hateful as were its objects, was not a good basis for a scientific study of economics, or for a constructive theory of the system by which capitalism was to be superseded. It has perhaps been a misfortune that Marxist doctrine became crystallized as a result of the study of industrial England in the '40s; at a later period, it might have taken a form less fierce and capable of winning adherents over a wider field.

Marxism, by appealing to proletarian hatred, has lost many important possible allies. At the same time, hatred being the most dynamic of human passions, it has generated a movement more energetic and determined than it could have been if it had had a less degree of fierceness. This fierceness was from the first quite deliberate. In an open letter against H. Kriege, written in 1846, Marx points out that love has not succeeded, in 1800 years, in bettering social conditions, and does not give the necessary energetic power of action. The actual circumstances of the present-day world, he says, with their sharp opposition of capital and labour, are a more powerful source of Socialist opinions than love of mankind. 'These circumstances,' he says, 'call out to us: "This cannot remain so, this must become different, and we ourselves, we human beings, must make it different." This iron necessity gives to socialist efforts expansion and actively powerful supporters, and will open the way to socialist reforms by transformation of existing economic relations sooner than all the love that glows in all the feeling hearts of the world.'

To appeal to hatred may be the right psychology for winning victory in a war; so all the belligerents thought from 1914 to 1918. But it is not the right psychology for subsequent construction; to us, who suffer the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles, this should be obvious. Marx was not a wholly pleasant character: envy and malice abound in his pages. Unfortunately, much of what was least admirable in his disposition has been copied by his followers. One cannot but feel that any war waged in such a spirit must, if successful, lead to a peace as disastrous as that of Versailles. Hatred, indulged beyond a point, becomes a habit, and must seek perpetually new victims.

But, further, it is very doubtful whether, in an efficient modern

State, the proletariat alone can hope to win the victory over capitalism. The capitalists, together with those who feel their interests at one with them, are not, as Marx supposed they would become, a small proportion of the population. Moreover, as things are now, they embrace the bulk of technical experts upon whom modern war depends. Is it likely that the air force would be on the side of the proletariat? Could the proletariat win without it? This is only one of many questions confronting the modern Marxist.

Marx's doctrine of the class war was one of the forces that killed nineteenth-century liberalism in Europe, by frightening the middle classes into reaction, and by teaching that political opinions are, and always must be, based upon economic bias rather than upon any consideration of the general good. In America, where Marx has had little political influence, old-fashioned liberalism still survives, and is at present engaged in a quite un-Marxian attempt at reconstruction. Perhaps it is too late for such gentle methods; perhaps the world cannot now escape the purgatory of violent class-war. But if this is inevitable, Marx's writing has helped to make it so.

Marx's doctrines, like those of other men, are partly true and partly false. There is much that can be controverted, but there are four points in his theory that are of such importance as to prove him a man of supreme intelligence.

The first is the concentration of capital, passing gradually from free competition to monopoly.

The second is economic motivation in politics, which now is taken almost for granted, but was, when he propounded it, a daring innovation.

The third is the necessity for the conquest of power by those who are not possessed of capital. This follows from economic motivation, and is to be contrasted with Owen's appeal to benevolence.

The fourth is the necessity of acquisition by the State of all the means of production, with the consequence that Socialism must, from its inception, embrace a whole nation, if not the whole world. Marx's predecessors aimed at small communities in which, as they supposed, Socialism could be tried experimentally on a small scale, but he perceived the futility of all such attempts.

It is on these four grounds that Marx deserves to be considered the founder of scientific Socialism. Like other founders of doc-

trines he needs emendation in various respects, and misfortune is likely to result if he is treated with religious awe. But if he is treated as fallible, he will still be found to contain much of the most important truth.

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